Blackboard collaborate™
enterprise instant messaging

User's Guide

July 21, 2011

Getting Started

Welcome to Blackboard IM

Blackboard IM is an academic-centric instant collaboration solution designed to promote learning through group work and academic and administrative help. One of the main differences between Blackboard IM and other collaboration solutions is that Blackboard IM synchronizes with your institution's enrollment records. This means that students and teachers are automatically connected with other Blackboard IM users enrolled in the same courses. Blackboard IM also includes advanced features such as video chat, screen sharing, and a robust whiteboard, which allow everyone at your institution to collaborate and communicate quickly and easily.

If you don't already have Blackboard IM, follow the instructions in *Creating a Blackboard IM Account* on page 3 to get it.

System Requirements

The minimum system requirements for Blackboard IM are as follows:

- Windows XP+ or Mac OS 10.5+
- 128 MB RAM (256 MB recommended)
- An Internet connection at 56 kbps or higher
- Sound card (for Audio Calling)
- Speakers and microphone for audio calling
  (USB headset with integrated microphone recommended)
- USB or integrated webcam (for Video Calling)

Creating a Blackboard IM Account

Use one of these three methods to create a Blackboard IM account:

- **Through a Course Management System**: Navigate to any Blackboard IM link in your institution's Course Management System (CMS). For complete instructions, refer to Locating a Blackboard IM Link in Your Course Management System.
- **By Invitation**: Follow the instructions and click the link in an email invitation from Blackboard Collaborate, your institution, or another Blackboard IM user (such as an instructor or classmate).
- **With a Registration Code**: Go to the Blackboard IM Registration page here and enter a unique registration code from your institution along with your last name (surname) as it appears in your institution's systems

Each of these methods leads to the Blackboard IM registration page. Follow the steps below to fill out the form.

Create a Blackboard IM account

Your Blackboard IM ID will be used for log in and will display to other users. All fields are required.

Create your Blackboard IM ID:	john_smith suggest more...
Email:	johnsmith@example.com
Confirm Email:	johnsmith@example.com
Choose a Password:	••••••••••••••••••• Note: Passwords are case sensitive and must be at least 6 characters
Confirm Password:	•••••••••••••••••••
Security Question:	What is your favorite town?

Important! The answer to your security question will be required if you forget your password.

Answer:	Calgary

☑ I've read and agree to the Blackboard IM Terms and Conditions and Privacy Policy

Submit

To Create a Blackboard IM Account

1. **Create your Blackboard IM ID**: In Blackboard IM, you are identified by your full name, as it appears in your institution's systems. Your Blackboard IM ID is used for logging in, managing your account, and allowing users who are not in your classes to contact you. This ID is unique and does not need to match your institution's systems. If you are associated with two or more institutions that use Blackboard IM, you can use the same Blackboard IM ID for both (refer to Linking Accounts for instructions).

2. **Email**: Each Blackboard IM ID must be associated with a unique email address.

3. **Password**: Enter a password that is memorable, but difficult to guess.

4. **Security Question**: Choose a security question from the list. In the event that you cannot remember your password, this question will be used for password recovery.

Once you have created your Blackboard IM ID, you can install Blackboard IM on your computer. For complete details, refer to Downloading and Installing Blackboard IM.

> **Note:**
> Unlike in other instant collaboration solutions, in Blackboard IM, you are identified by your full name, as it appears in your institution's systems. There is also a Blackboard IM ID associated with your account, which is used for logging in, managing your account, and allowing users who are not in your classes to contact you.

> **See Also:**
> Downloading and Installing Blackboard IM
> Locating a Blackboard IM Link in Your Course Management System
> System Requirements
> Inviting Users to Blackboard IM

Locating a Blackboard IM Link in Your Course Management System

Blackboard IM synchronizes with course enrollments at your institution, so you can access the Blackboard IM registration page (and later, the Blackboard IM Settings page) via a link in your Course Management System (CMS).

To Locate a Blackboard IM Link in Your CMS

1. Log in to your Course Management System.

2. Navigate to any Blackboard IM link. This step varies slightly between CMS systems:

   - If you are using Blackboard Enterprise or Learn, the Blackboard IM link may be located in the Communication Area, the Tools Area, or on the My Institution page.

   - If you are using Blackboard Vista / Campus Blackboard Vista/Campus WebCT Edition, the Blackboard IM link may be located in the External Courses area of the My Blackboard (or My WebCT) page, or within a Section.

   - If you are using Moodle, the Blackboard IM link can either be an activity within a course, or an image within a Block.

3. The Blackboard IM registration form appears. If you have already created a Blackboard IM account, the Blackboard IM Settings page appears instead.

For information on registering for Blackboard IM, refer to *Creating a Blackboard IM Account*.

Linking Accounts

If you change institutions and want to continue using your existing Blackboard IM account, you can link it to your new institution. As long as you are still active on your previous institution's server, you can also access a list of your classmates for both institutions simultaneously.

To Link an Existing Blackboard IM Account to a New Institution

1. Use any of the three methods detailed in Creating a Blackboard IM Account as it pertains to your new institution. The Blackboard IM Registration page appears.

Step 3: Install and Start Chatting!
The Blackboard IM Setup Wizard will walk you through installation. Once complete, you can use Blackboard IM at any time.

⚠ Already have a Blackboard IM account? Link it!

Create a Blackboard IM account

Your Blackboard IM ID will be used for log in and will display to other users. All fields are required.

2. Click the **Already have a Blackboard IM account? Link it!** link. The Link Your Blackboard IM Account page opens.

3. Log in using your existing Blackboard IM account information. Your new account is linked to your Blackboard IM account and the Blackboard IM Settings page opens.

> **Note:**
> If your institution is Walled In, you will not be able to link your accounts unless you are an administrator or instructor. Students at Walled In institutions can only communicate within a single institution. As an alternative, you can create a second Blackboard IM ID with a different email address at your second institution.

Downloading and Installing Blackboard IM

You can download and install the Blackboard IM client after creating your Blackboard IM account. You may perform this step either immediately after creating your account, or at a later time.

> **Tip:**
> You can install Blackboard IM on as many computers as you wish, making it easy to keep in touch with friends and classmates, even if you are not at your primary computer.

To Download and Install Blackboard IM for Windows

1. Log in to the Blackboard IM Settings page using your Blackboard IM ID and password.

   - If you just created your account, you may already be logged in to the Blackboard IM Settings page.

   - If you did not just create your account, or you need to download and install Blackboard IM again, go to http://pronto.wimba.com and sign in using your Blackboard IM ID and password.

2. In the Download section, click the **Windows 7, Vista, XP** link. The Blackboard IM installer downloads to your hard drive.
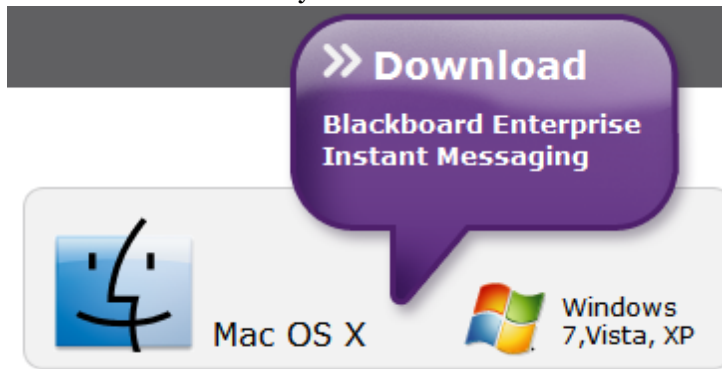
3. Double-click the **BlackboardIMSetup** file that was downloaded. The installer launches.

4. Click **OK**.

5. Click **Next**.

6. Review the license agreement and click **I Agree**.

7. Select whether you wish to install Desktop and QuickLaunch Shortcuts.

8. Click **Next**.

9. Select where you wish to install Blackboard IM.

10. Click **Install**. Blackboard IM installs and a confirmation screen opens.

11. Select whether you wish to run the program right away.

12. Click **Finish**.

To Download and Install Blackboard IM for Macintosh

1. Log in to the Blackboard IM Settings page using your Blackboard IM ID and password.

   - If you just created your account, you may already be logged in to the Blackboard IM Settings page.

   - If you did not just create your account, or you need to download and install Blackboard IM again, go to http://pronto.wimba.com and sign in using your Blackboard IM ID and password.

2. In the Download section, click the **Mac OS X** link. The Blackboard IM installer downloads to your hard drive and the End User License Agreement opens.

3. Review the license agreement and click **Agree**. The disk image opens.
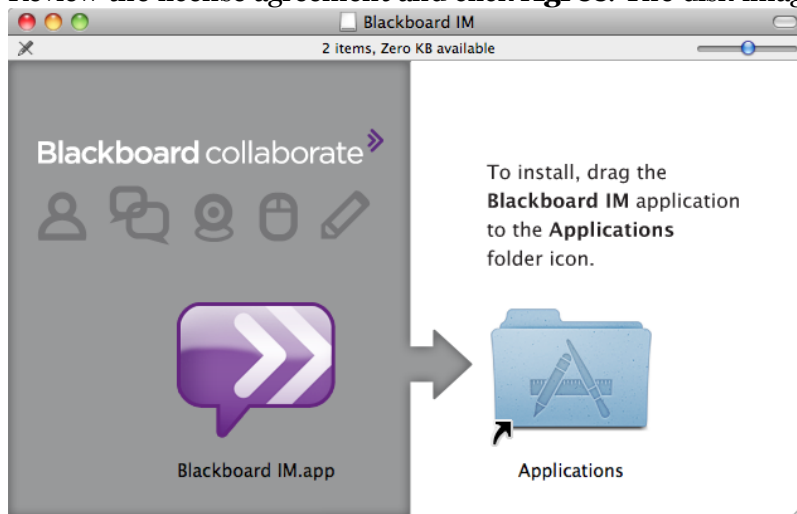
4. Drag the **Blackboard IM** icon to the Applications folder icon.

5. Launch Blackboard IM from your Applications folder.

> **See Also:**
> Language Settings
> Creating a Blackboard IM Account
> Accessing the Blackboard IM Settings Page

Logging In

You log in to the Blackboard IM client using the Blackboard IM ID and password that you chose when creating your account. Whenever you launch Blackboard IM, the login window appears.

To Log in to Blackboard IM

1. Enter your Blackboard IM ID.
2. Enter your Blackboard IM password.
3. Click the **sign in** button.

Tips:
a) You can set Blackboard IM to remember your Blackboard IM ID and password by checking the **remember me box**. If you do this, anyone with access to your computer can access your Blackboard IM account.

b) You can also set Blackboard IM to automatically sign you in when you launch the program by checking the **sign in automatically** box. This setting can be changed in the Preferences window.

See Also:
Creating a Blackboard IM Account

Interface Overview

About the Blackboard IM Interface

Blackboard IM is based around the Blackboard IM window, from which you manage communication with other users and access the program's more advanced features. The main elements at the top of the Blackboard IM window are the Menu Bar, the Status Bar, the Contacts tab, the the Classmates tab, and the School tab.
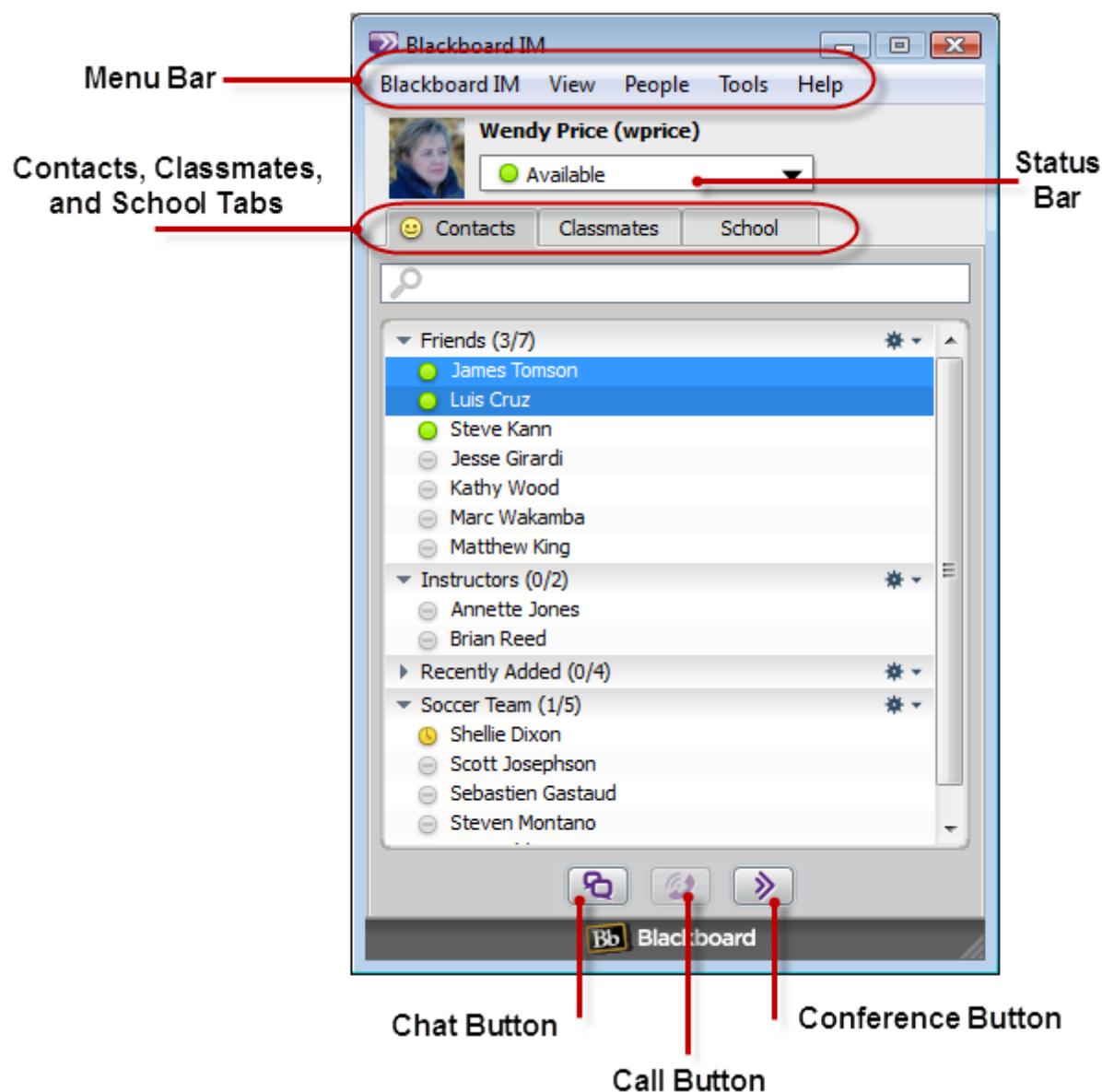
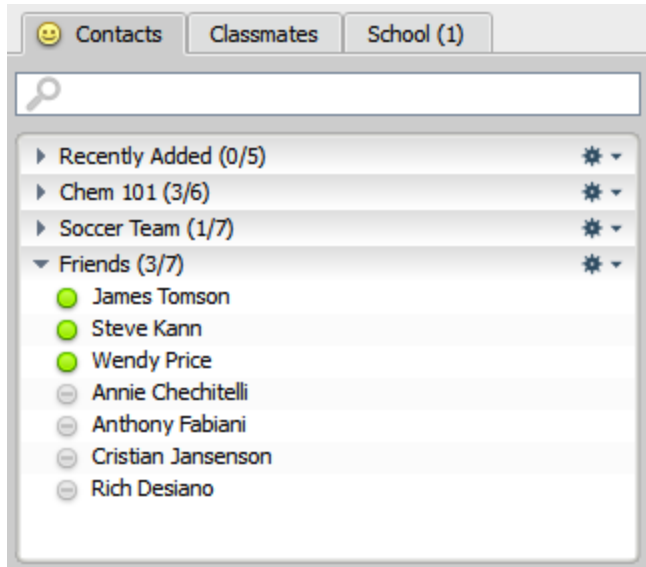The bottom of the window holds the Chat, Call, and Conference buttons.
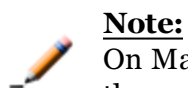
> **Note:**
> On Mac OS X, the Menu Bar is located at the top of the screen, rather than within the Blackboard IM window.

See Also:
Adding a New Contact to Your Contacts Tab
Changing Your Status

The Contacts Tab

The Contacts tab is where you keep track of your friends, study groups, and anyone else that you contact often. This tab is initially empty, but you can add any Blackboard IM user, as long as you know his or her Blackboard IM ID; the user does not need to be in one of your classes, or even at your institution. The **Find** field allows you to search for a specific user in the list. You can also add groups to keep your contacts organized.

The Classmates Tab
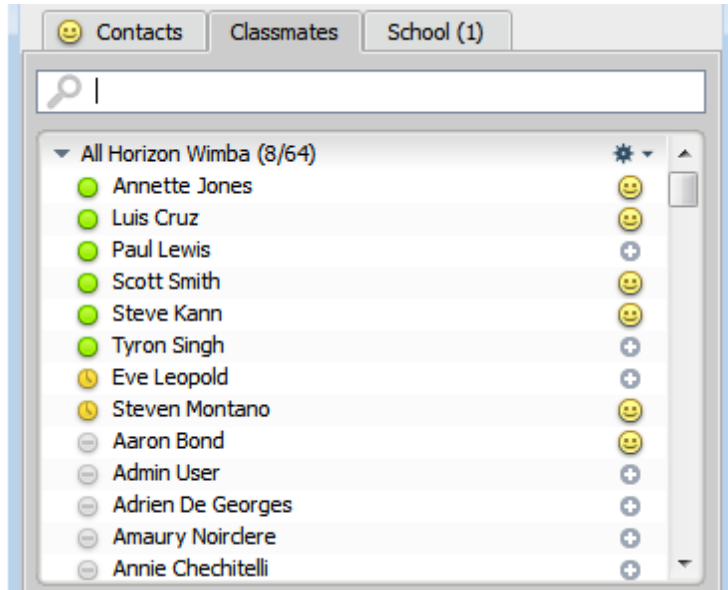
The Classmates tab lists all of the Blackboard IM users who are in your classes. If the instructor of a course has a Blackboard IM account, the label **(Instructor)** appears next to his or her name. You do not need to add users to your Classmates tab; it is automatically populated based on course enrollments within your institution's Course Management System. You also cannot manually add or delete classmates. The **Find** field allows you to search for users in the list.

> **Tip:**
> Classmates appear only while you are enrolled in a class. However, users remain in your Contacts tab indefinitely, so make sure you add classmates with whom you want to keep in touch as contacts before the semester ends.

The Status Bar
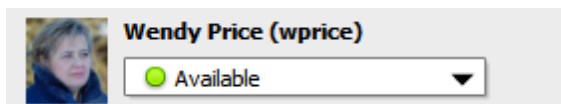
The Status Bar shows your current availability. Since other Blackboard IM users see this status, you can use it to tell other people what you are doing and if it is a good time to contact you. Status messages are fully customizable and can be saved for future use.

> **See Also:**
> Changing Your Status
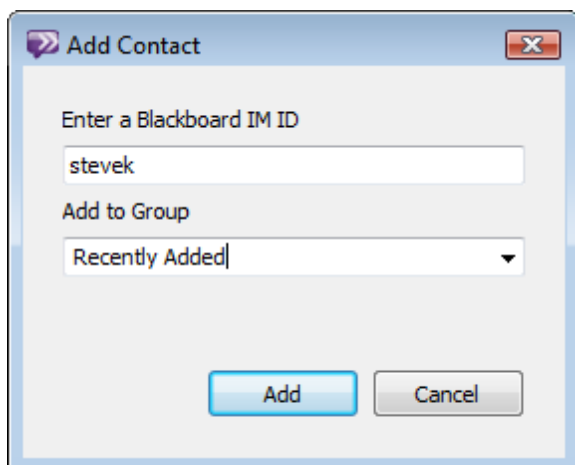> Creating a New Custom Status

Managing Your Accounts and

Contacts

About Accounts and Contacts

One of the unique features of Blackboard IM is that it automatically populates your Classmates tab, allowing you to communicate with other Blackboard IM users in your classes without having to know their Blackboard IM IDs. You can quickly see how many people from each of your classes use Blackboard IM, and who is currently online. You can still keep a personalized list of users by using the Contacts tab, which allows you to add Blackboard IM users, regardless of whether or not they are in your classes.

Adding a New Contact to Your Contacts Tab

The Contacts tab is where you keep track of your friends, classmates, instructors, and anyone else that you want to be able to easily contact. You can add any Blackboard IM user to your contacts, even if they are not in one of your classes or enrolled at your institution.

To add a classmate to your Contacts tab, click the plus icon ⊕ next to the user's name in the Classmates tab. The smiley icon 🙂 indicates that the user has been added to your Contacts tab.

Blackboard collaborate.

Add Contact

Enter a Blackboard IM ID

stevek

Add to Group

Recently Added

[Add] [Cancel]

To Add a User to Your Contacts Tab by Blackboard IM ID

1. Click **Add Contact** on the **People** menu.
   The Add Contact window opens.

2. Type the Blackboard IM ID of the user you wish to add.

3. Select the group within your Contacts tab to which you wish to add the person.

4. Click **Add**. The user is added to your Contacts tab.

Note:
You can use the Blackboard IM ID method to add any Blackboard IM user to your Contacts tab, even if they are in your Classmates tab. However, clicking the plus icon is the faster way to add classmates.

Tip:
If a user who is not in your Contacts or Classmates tab contacts you, a notification appears above the message giving you the option to add the user to your Contacts tab or to block the user.

See Also:
Adding a New Contact to Your Contacts Tab
Adding a Contact to a Group
Removing a User from Your Contacts Tab or a Group

Adding a New Group to Your Contacts Tab

You can organize users in your Contacts tab by groups. For example, you could create a group for your study partners, or for your friends from high school. When you start Blackboard IM for the first time, the Contacts tab is empty. When you add a new contact, unless you specify otherwise in the Add Contact window, the user is automatically added to a default group called **Recently Added**. You can create as many groups as you wish to keep your contacts organized.

To Create a New Group

1. On the **People** menu, click **Add Group**.
   The Add Group window opens.

2. Type the name of the group you wish to create.

3. Click **Add**. The group is created and added to your Contacts tab.

> **See Also:**
> Adding a New Contact to Your Contacts Tab
> Adding a Contact to a Group
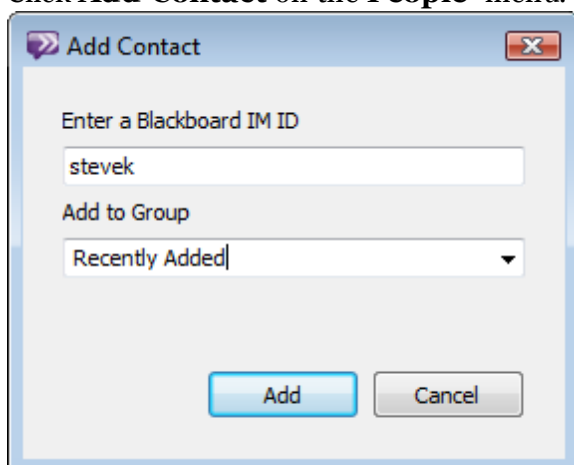
Adding a Contact to a Group

Once you have created groups in your Contacts tab, the next step is to add contacts to these groups. There are a couple of different ways to add a contact to a group, depending on whether or not you have already added the user to your Contacts tab.

To add a user that is already in your Contacts tab to a group, simply drag and drop his or her name to the name of the group.
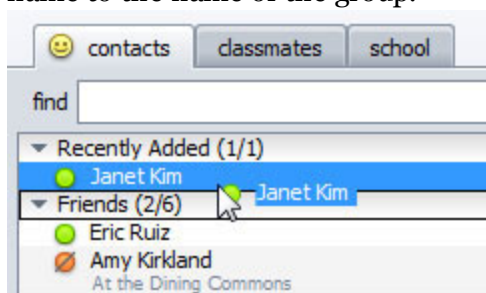
To Add a User Not Already in Your Contacts Tab to a Group

1. Click **Add Contact** on the **People** menu. The Add Contact window opens.

2. Type the Blackboard IM ID of the person you wish to add.

3. Select the group to which you wish to add the person.

4. Click **Add**. The user is added to the selected group within your Contacts tab.

> **See Also:**
> Adding a New Contact to Your Contacts Tab
> Adding a New Group to Your Contacts Tab
> Removing a User from Your Contacts Tab or a Group

Removing a User from Your Contacts Tab or a Group

The process for removing a user from your Contacts tab is the same as removing a user from a group; if you remove a user from a group, he or she is also removed from the Contacts tab (unless the person is in more than one group). There two different ways to accomplish this.

To Remove a Contact Using the Contacts Tab

1. Click the **Contacts** tab, if it is not already selected.

2. Right-click (Ctrl-click on Macintosh) the name of the contact that you wish to remove.

3. Select **Remove *User Name***. The Remove *User Name* window opens.

4. Click **OK**. The user is removed from both the Contacts tab and the group.

To Remove a Contact Using the Actions Menu

1. Click the **Contacts** tab, if it is not already selected.

2. Click the name of the contact that you wish to remove.

3. On the **People** menu, click **Remove *User Name***. The Remove *User Name* window opens.

4. Click **OK**. The user is removed from both the Contacts tab and the group.

Note:
If you remove a contact that is in one of your courses, he or she will still be listed in your Classmates tab. Since the Classmates tab is automatically populated from your institution's enrollments, you cannot manually add or remove classmates.

See Also:
Adding a New Contact to Your Contacts Tab
Adding a Contact to a Group

Changing Your Status

The Status Bar displays your current availability. Other Blackboard IM users see this status, so you can use it to tell other people what you are doing, and if it is a good time to contact you. You can change your status to one of the default options, or create a new custom status.

The default status options are:

- **Available**
  The Available status lets other users know that you are free and that it's a good time to contact you.

- **Away**
  The Away status lets other users know that you are busy and that it may not be a good time to contact you. You may wish to create a custom away status to let other people know what you're doing or when you'll be back.

- **Office Hours**
  The Office Hours status is unique because selecting it accesses a Blackboard IM feature, instead of just displaying a status message. When you set your status to Office Hours, a new Office Hours session is started with you as the host.

- **Invisible**
  The Invisible status is a way of hiding yourself from other users while still remaining online. When you set your status to invisible, you appear to others users as if you were

offline, but you can still communicate with other users normally. If your status is set to Invisible and another user tries to send you message, you *will* receive the message.

- **Offline** ⊖
  The Offline status is the same as logging out of your Blackboard IM Account; when you are offline, you cannot contact other users and other users cannot contact you. If you are offline, and another user tries to send you a message, you will *not* receive the message.

To Change Your Status

1. Click the Status Bar.
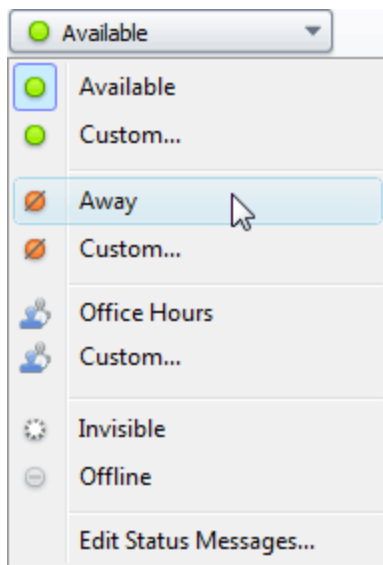
2. Select the desired status. Your new status is set.

> **See Also:**
> Creating a New Custom Status
> Using Office HoursStatus Preferences

Creating a New Custom Status

If you do not want to use the default status messages, or you prefer to display a more specific message, you can create a custom status. While the most common use of custom statuses is creating custom away messages, you can also create a custom available status. Custom statuses can be saved for future use.

To Create a New Custom Status

1. Click the Status Bar.

2. Select **Custom…** under Available, Away, or Office Hours. The Edit Custom Status window opens.
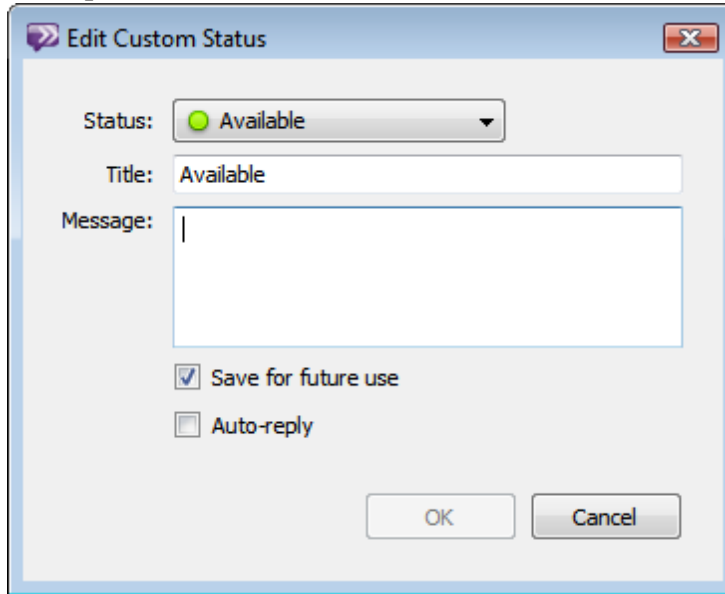
3. Type a name for the status in the Title field. This title is for your own reference only and is not seen by other users.

4. Type the status in the Message field. This is the text that is displayed to other users.

5. If you wish to be able to reuse this status in the future, check the **Save for future use** box.

6. If you want other users to automatically receive a reply message with your status when enabled, check the **Auto-reply** box.

7. Click **OK**. The custom status is created and is set as your current status.

Tips:
- If you want the Title and the Message of the Status to be the same, you can simply type the text in the Message field; the Title field is filled in automatically.
- You can edit the list of saved custom statuses through the Status Preferences.

See Also:
Changing Your Status

Modifying Your Profile

You can create a personalized profile with a picture to share information about yourself with other Blackboard IM users. Adding a picture, or other information, is optional. You can add or modify profile information from the Profile section of the Preferences window.

To access the Profile editor, click your profile picture box to the left of the Status Bar in the Blackboard IM window.
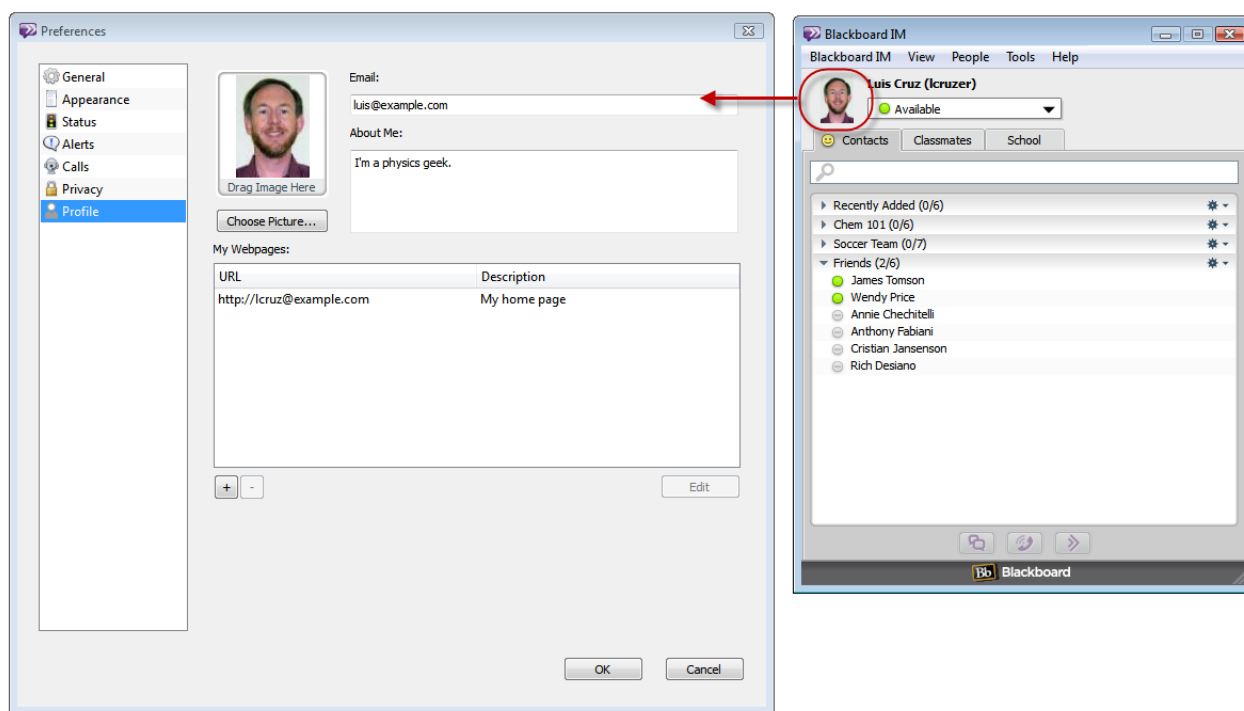
Profile Picture

You can add a profile picture that is visible to other Blackboard IM users to add a personal touch to your profile. Your picture is visible any time you contact another Blackboard IM user, anytime another user contacts you, when a user views your profile, or when a user hovers his or her cursor over your name in the Contacts or Classmates tab. To add a profile picture, either drag an image file from your hard drive to the **Drag Image Here** box, or click the **Choose Picture...** button and browse your hard drive for the desired picture. The profile picture box is optimized for square images, but accepts images of any proportions.

Email

You can add an email address to make it easier for other users to contact you when you're not on signed in to Blackboard IM. This address does not need to be your school email address or the address associated with your Blackboard IM account.

About Me

The About Me box allows you to type a brief description to introduce yourself to other users. You may wish to include your interests, your major, where you're from, or the type of people with whom you would like to communicate using Blackboard IM.

My Webpages

The My Webpages box allows you to include links in your profile to the websites of your choice. You may wish to add personal, course, or department webpages.

> **See Also:**
> Profile Preferences

Changing Your Display Settings

You can control the way in which users are displayed in the Blackboard IM window by using the View menu. These display settings apply to both the Contacts and the Classmates tabs.
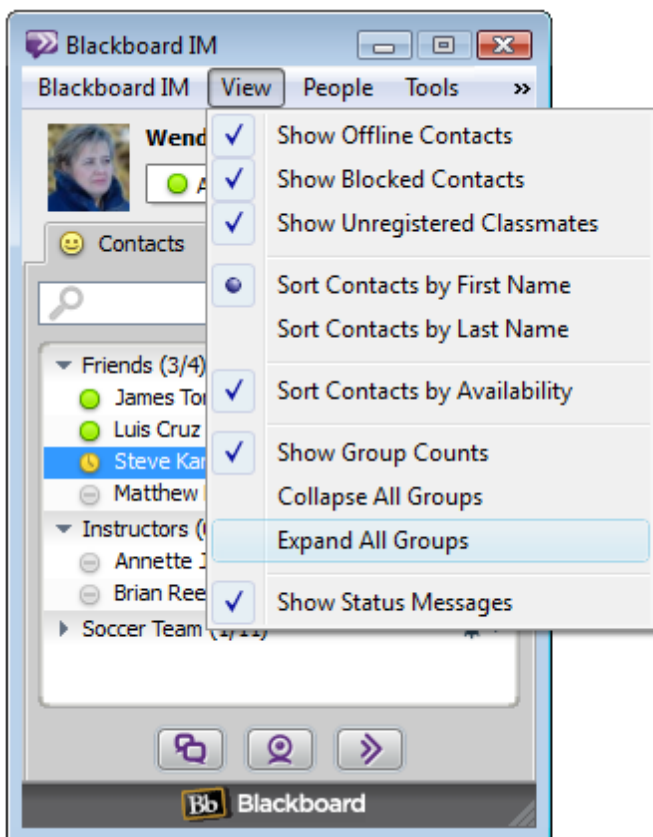
Show Offline Contacts

Toggles the display of users that are not currently logged in to Blackboard IM

Show Blocked Contacts

Toggles the display of users that you have blocked

Show Unregistered Classmates

Toggles the display of classmates that are not currently registered for Blackboard IM; this option only appears if Invitations are enabled at your institution

Sort Contacts by First Name

Displays users organized alphabetically by first name

Sort Contacts by Last Name

Displays users organized alphabetically by last name

Sort Contacts by Availability

Displays users that are available first, followed by users that are away, users that are idle, and users that are offline

Show Group Counts

Toggles the display of user counts for each group or course

Collapse All Groups

Hides the user list for all groups, showing only the group name. You can collapse or expand individual groups by clicking the arrow next to the group name.

Expand All Groups

Reveals the user list for all groups. You can collapse or expand individual groups by clicking the arrow next to the group name.

Show Status Messages

Toggles the display of users' custom status messages under their names in the Blackboard IM window. If this option is disabled, you can view a user's status by hovering your mouse over his or her name.

> **See Also:**
> Blocking and Unblocking Users

Blocking and Unblocking Users

By default, all Blackboard IM users can freely communicate with each other, regardless of whether or not they are in same classes, or even at the same institution. However, if there are users that you do not want to be able to contact you, you can block them. Blocked users cannot contact you, and you cannot contact them. If the user is in either your Contacts or Classmates tab, you can still see his or her status, but you always appear as offline to the blocked user. Users never know that they have been blocked, and you can unblock users at any time.

You can block or unblock a user from either the Blackboard IM window or the Preferences window. Also, if someone not in your Contacts or Classmates tab contacts you, you are given the option of blocking the user.

To Block a User from the Blackboard IM Window

1. Right-click (Ctrl-click on Macintosh) the name of the user that you wish to block in either the Classmates or Contacts tab.

2. Select **Block *User Name*** from the pop-up menu. The Block Contact window opens.

3. Click **Yes**. The name appears with a strikethrough to indicate that the user has been blocked.

Names of blocked users appear with a strikethrough

- Soccer Team (2/13)
  - Luis Cruz
  - Steve Kann
  - Aaron Bond

Note:
If the user is already blocked, the **Block *User Name*** option changes to **Unblock *User Name***; you can use this option to unblock the selected user.

Tip:
If you do not want blocked users to appear in your Contacts and Classmates tabs, disable **Show Blocked Contacts** in the View menu.

To Manage Blocked Users from The Preferences Menu

1. Click the **Blackboard IM** menu.

2. Select **Preferences…** The Preferences window opens.

3. Select **Privacy**.

4. Add or remove users from your Block List as desired:

    a. To add a user to your Block List, click the plus button ⊞, type the user's Blackboard IM ID, and click **Add**.

    b. To remove a user from you Block List, select the user from the list and click the minus button ⊟.

5. When you have finished modifying the Block List, click **OK**.

Tip:
Since the Block List allows you to block users by their Blackboard IM IDs, you can use this method to block any Blackboard IM user— even if he or she is not in any of your classes.

Viewing a User's Profile

Any Blackboard IM user can create a Profile to share with friends, classmates, and instructors. You can use Profiles to find out more information about a user, or to find a user's contact information (if he or she has shared it).

You can see a partial profile by hovering your cursor over a user's name in your Contacts or Classmates tab. This view shows you the user's picture, current status, and About Me description; it does not show email addresses or webpages.

To View a User's Profile

1. Click the name of the desired user in either your Contacts or Classmates tab.

2. On the **People** menu, click **Show Profile**.
   A new Chat window opens with the user's profile displayed.
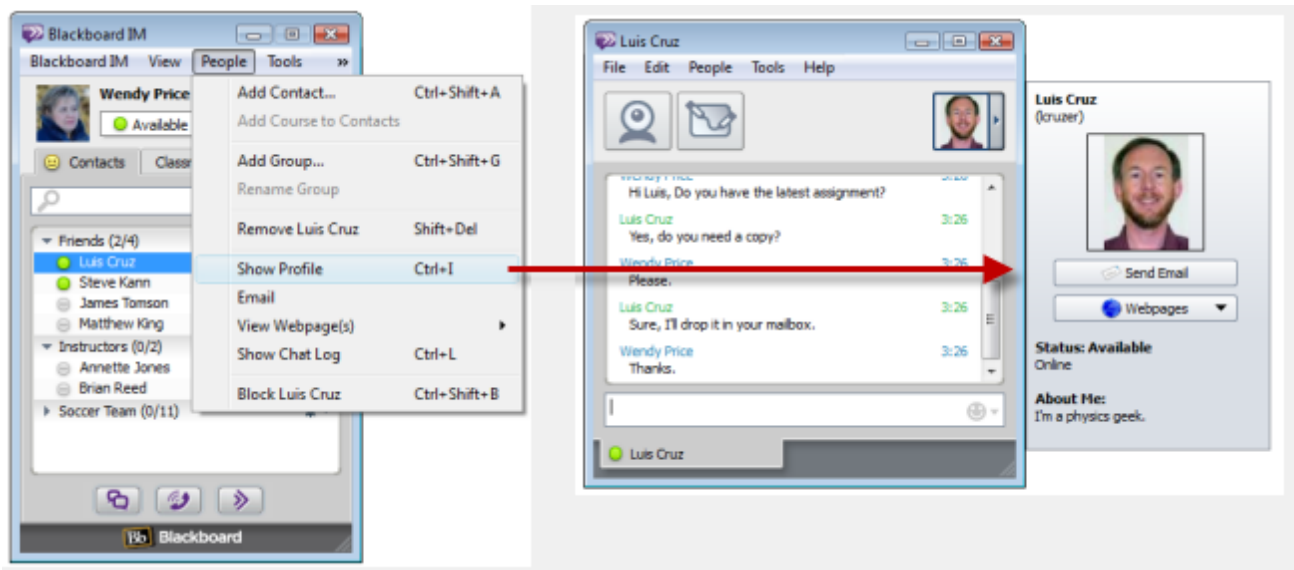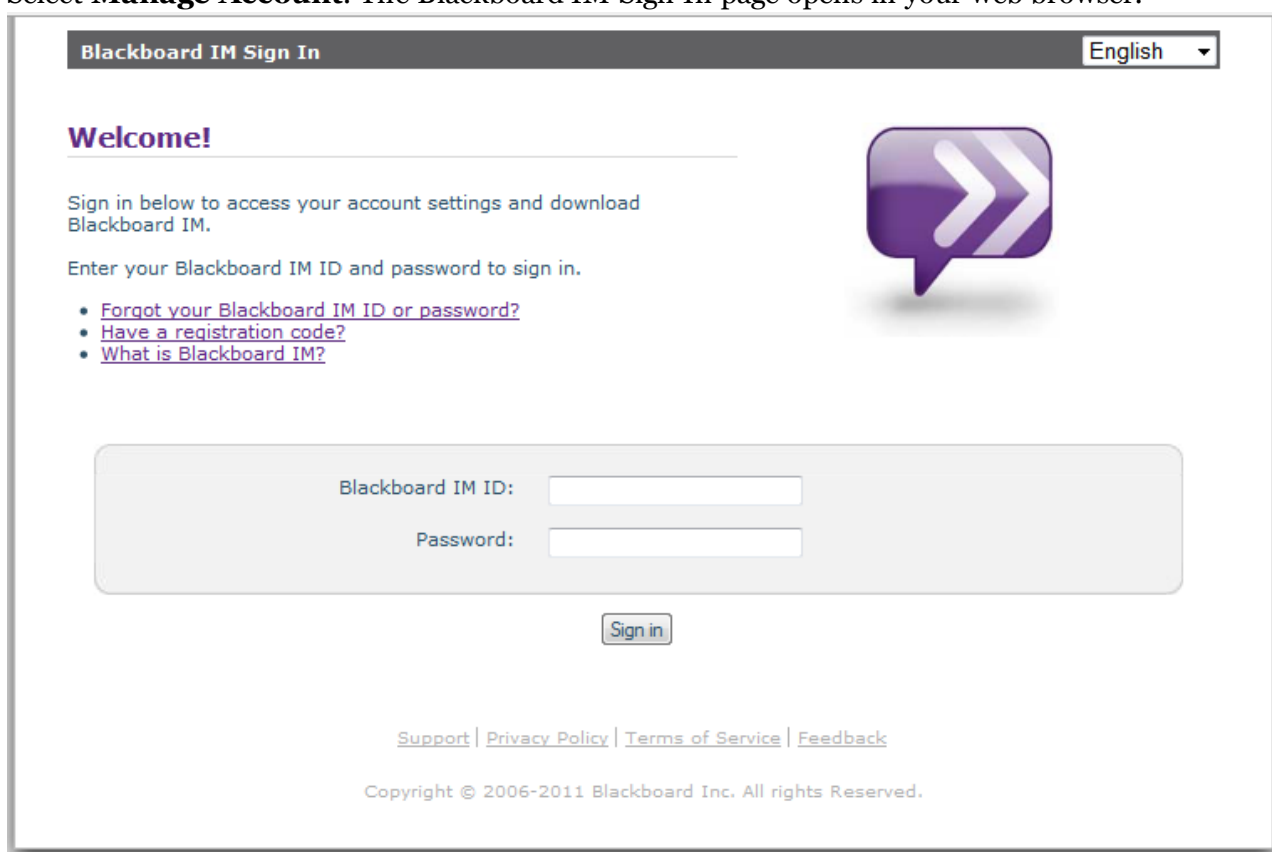
Accessing the Blackboard IM Settings Page

The Blackboard IM Settings page is a web portal that allows you to view and manage your account settings and login information, as well as determine which of your courses appear in Blackboard IM. You can access the Blackboard IM Settings page either from a link within Blackboard IM, or directly using your web browser.

To Access the Blackboard IM Settings Page from Blackboard IM

1. Click the **Blackboard IM** menu.
2. Select **Manage Account**. The Blackboard IM Sign In page opens in your web browser.

3. Type your Blackboard IM ID.
4. Type your Blackboard IM password.
5. Click the **Sign In** button.

> **See Also:**
> Modifying Your Account Settings
> Modifying Your Course Settings

Modifying Your Account Settings

From the Blackboard IM Settings page, you can view and modify your account settings including your password, the email address associated with your account, and your security question.

Account Settings

Blackboard IM ID:	wprice
Password:	*********
Email:	wprice@horizonwimba.com
Security Question:	[not shown]
Language:	English

change password...
change email...
change security question...

To Change Your Password

1. On the Blackboard IM Settings page, click the **change password...** link. The Change Password window opens.

2. Type your current password in the Current password field.

3. Type your desired password in the New password field.

4. Re-type your desire password in the Confirm new password field.

5. Click the **Save** button. The Password changed confirmation page opens, indicating that your new password has been successfully updated.

To Change the Email Address Associated with Your Blackboard IM Account

1. On the Blackboard IM Settings page, click the **change email...** link. The Change Email window opens.

2. Type your password in the Current password field.

3. Type the email address that you would like associated with your Blackboard IM account in the New Email field.

4. Re-type the desired email address in the Confirm New Email field.

5. Click the **Save** button. The Email changed confirmation page opens, indicating that your new email address has been set successfully.

> **Note:**
> The email address associated with your Blackboard IM account does not have to be a school email address or the email address associated with your CMS account.

![Blackboard collaborate]

To Change Your Security Question

1. On the Blackboard IM Settings page, click the **change security question...** link. The Change Security Question window opens.

2. Select a Security Question from the drop-down menu.

3. Type your response in the Answer field.

4. Click the **Save** button. The Security Question changed page opens, indicating that your security question has been successfully updated.

To Change the Language Setting for Your Blackboard IM Account

1. On the Blackboard IM Settings Page, click the **Language** drop-down menu.

2. Select the desired language.

To Delete Your Blackboard IM Account

1. On the Blackboard IM Settings page, click the **Support** link. The Blackboard IM Support page opens.

2. Click the **Delete Your Account** link. The Delete Your Account page opens.

3. Select a reason for deleting your Blackboard IM Account from the drop-down menu.

4. Add any additional comments in the Comments box.

5. Click the **Continue** button. The Confirm Delete page opens.

6. Type your Blackboard IM password in the Password field.

7. Click the **Delete this account** button. Your account is deleted.

> **Note:**
> Reasons for deleting your Blackboard IM account include if you are unhappy with your Blackboard IM ID or if you accidentally created more than one account.

See Also:
Accessing the Blackboard IM Settings Page
Modifying Your Course Settings
Language Settings

Modifying Your Course Settings

The Blackboard IM Settings page allows you to individually enable or disable Blackboard IM for each of your courses. This can be accomplished in the Course Settings area of the page.

General

Checking the box under the General heading allows you to select whether Blackboard IM is automatically enabled for new courses in which you enroll. Keep in mind that this setting will remain in effect for future semesters.

Course Participant

The Course Participant section contains a list of all of the courses for which you can enable Blackboard IM. Check the box next to a course name to enable Blackboard IM or uncheck the box to disable it.

Note:
If Blackboard IM is disabled for a course, classmates will still be able to contact you. However, your name does not appear under the course name in their **Classmates** tab, and neither the course nor any classmates will appear in your **Classmates** tab. Effectively, it appears as if you are not enrolled in the course.

Course Instructor (Displays for Instructors Only)

This section is visible only if you are the instructor of a course. You have the option of enabling or disabling Blackboard IM for an entire course.

This setting will override the participant setting above. If a course is disabled, it will not appear in the participants' Classmates tab. However, Blackboard IM will still function, and participants will still be able to contact each other if they know each other's Blackboard IM ID or have each other saved in their **Contacts** tab.

Chatting

About Chat

Chat is the simplest form of communication in Blackboard IM and, in many cases, it is also the most effective. Also known as instant messaging, Chat allows you to send a message, which is received immediately, to any user currently logged in to Blackboard IM. The user can then reply to your message and you can have a conversation via a series of instant messages.

Chat can also be used as a starting point for accessing Blackboard IM's more advanced features. For example, before starting a Call with someone, you may wish to send the user an instant message to make sure that they have a microphone connected.

Starting a New Chat

Before you can start a new Chat with someone, the user must first be in either your Contacts or Classmates tab. There are several ways to start a new Chat with a contact or classmate.

To Start a New Chat

1. Do one of the following in either the Contacts or Classmates tab:

    - Double-click the name of the user you wish to contact.

    - Select the name of the user you wish to contact and click

- Select the name of the user you wish to contact and press the **Enter** key on your keyboard.
- Select the name of the user you wish to contact and click **Chat** on the **Tools** menu.

A new Chat window opens.
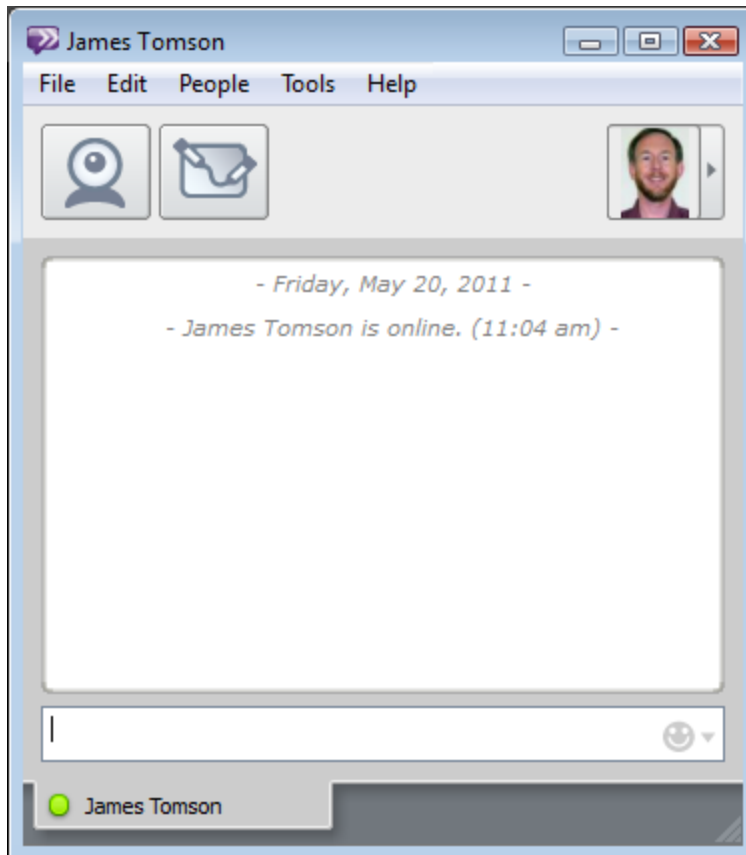
2. Type your first message in the input area at the bottom.
3. Press the **Enter** key on your keyboard. The Chat session starts and your message is sent.
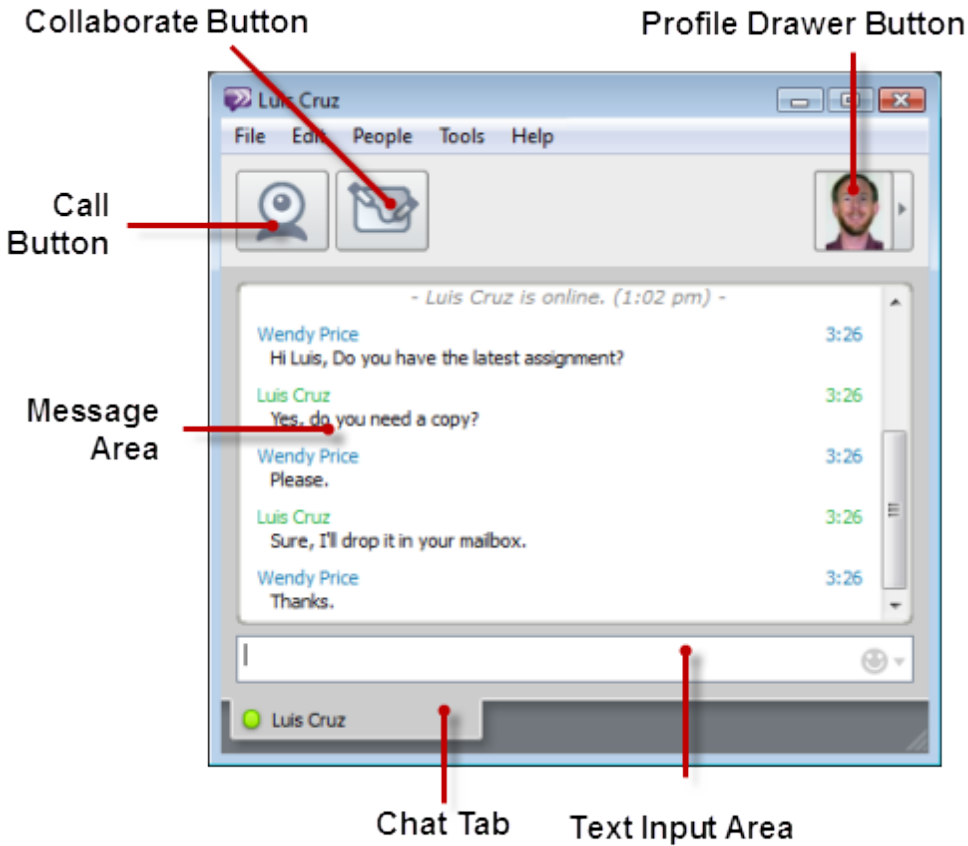
See Also:
The Chat Window
Ending a Chat

The Chat Window

The Chat window is where instant messaging conversations take place. When you start a new Chat, this window opens, showing you all of the messages that have been sent and allowing you to type new messages.

Collaborate Button

Call Button

Profile Drawer Button

Message Area

Chat Tab

Text Input Area

The Call Button

The Call button allows you to start a Call with the person with whom you are currently chatting. When you click the Call button, the other user receives a notification of an incoming call, and can then accept or reject the call.

It is possible to simultaneously use Calling and Chat with the same user; if you start a Call from the Chat window, your existing Chat remains open.

The Profile Drawer Button

Clicking the Profile button reveals a drawer showing the user's profile information and current status. Clicking the button again hides the drawer.

The Message Area

The Message area displays all of the messages that have been sent between you and the other user. The user's name appears every time the sender of the message changes; the time that each message was sent is displayed along the right side of the window. You can use the scrollbars to see older messages not currently visible in the window.

The Text Input Area

The Text Input Area is where you type new messages.

- Messages are not visible to the other user until you press the **Enter** key on your keyboard to send them. Sent messages then appear in the Message Area.

- You can use the drop-down menu on the right side of the area to add emoticons to your message.

- To insert a new line in the message without sending the message, press **Shift+Enter** on your keyboard. (You can reverse the behavior of Enter and Shift+Enter in the General Preferences.)

- You can also use some HTML tags or emoticons.

Chat Tabs

Below the Text Input Area are the Chat tabs. These tabs show the name and status of the users with whom you are currently messaging. They also display the pencil icon 🖊 when the other user is typing. This indication can be useful for helping you to avoid typing at the same time as another user. If you have multiple Chats open, each session is represented by a separate tab; clicking a tab brings the conversation into focus. Tabbed chat is enabled by default, but can be disabled in the Preferences window.

> **Tips:**
> • To cycle through tabs, press **Ctrl+Tab** on your keyboard (Windows) or **Command+Left Arrow** and **Command+Right Arrow** (Macintosh).
> • To go to a specific tag, press **CTRL+n** where n is the number of the tab.
> • You can rearrange the order of the tabs by dragging-and-dropping them.
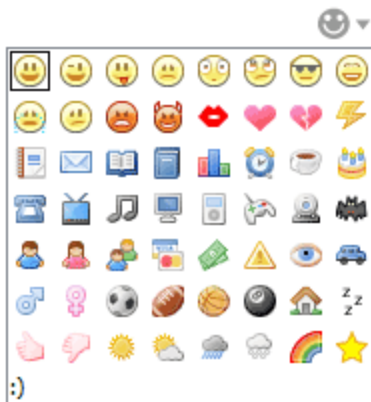
See Also:

Using Emoticons

Emoticons are special graphical icons that you can insert into any text-based chat to make your conversations more expressive and fun. The emoticons drop-down menu is located on the right side of the Text Input Area in all Chat windows.
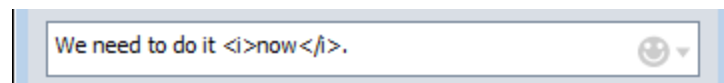

To insert an emoticon into your message, you can either click the image in the drop-down menu, or type its key combination (which is displayed in the lower left-hand corner of the drop down list).
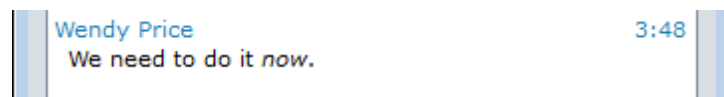
Using HTML

You can also use certain HTML tags in chat.

For example, entering this in the text input area

results in this appearing in the message area.

The table below lists all the supported tags.

Tag	Effect	Example Input and Output
\ or \	Makes text boldface.	This is \bold\ and \strong\. This is **bold** and **strong**.
\<center>	Centers text.	\<center>Summary\</center> 1:07 Summary
\<h1>, \<h2>, \<h3>, \<h4>, \<h5>, \<h6>	Creates a heading.	\ Summary of Results\ **Summary of Results**
\<i> or \	Makes text italicized.	This is \<i>italicized\</i> and \e-mphasized\. This is *italicized* and *emphasized*.
\<small> and \<big>	Changes the size of text.	This is \small\ and this is \<big>big\</big>. This is small and this is big.
\<sup> and \<sub>	Makes text super-scripted or sub-scripted.	This is \^{superscripted\} and this is _{subscripted\}. This is ^{superscripted} and this is $_{subscripted}$.
\<table>, \<td>, \<tr>	Creates tables.	\<table> \<tr> \<td>Fruit\</td> \<td>Vegetables\</td> \</tr> \<tr> \<td>Apples\</td> \<td>Cucumbers\</td> \</tr> \<tr> \<td>Bananas\</td> \<td>Carrots\</td> \</tr> \</table> | Fruit	Vegetables
Apples	Cucumbers
Bananas	Carrots	
\ , \ , \	Creates bulleted or numbered lists.	\ \ - This is a bulleted list, item one.\ \ - This is item two.\ \

Tag	Effect	Example Input and Output
		• This is a bulleted list, item one. • This is item two. - This is numbered list, item one. - This is item two. 1. This is numbered list, item one. 2. This is item two.

Using URLs

If you enter a URL in chat, it becomes a hyperlink that others can click on to view in their web browser.

There are also two special types of hyperlinks:

- links to YouTube videos
- links to Wikipedia articles

For these inks, you can click the ⊞ icon beside the URL to view the webpage directly within chat.
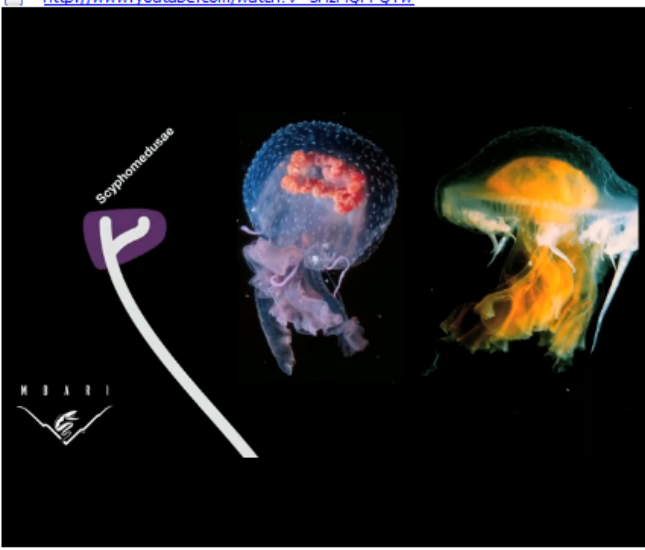
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Chatting
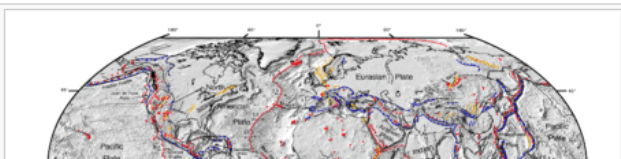
Group Chat

About Group Chat

Group Chat is similar to regular Chat except that enables you to chat with multiple users at the same time.

You can invite new participants to a Group Chat either while creating it, or after the session has already been created. Any participant, including the creator of the Group Chat, can leave a session at any time and the other participants are still able to continue the session.

Starting a New Group Chat

Before you can start a new Group Chat, the users that you wish to invite to the session must first be in either your Contacts or Classmates tab. Once the desired users are either contacts or classmates, there are several ways to start a new Group Chat.

To Start a New Group Chat

1. Select at least one of the users that you wish to invite in either the Contacts or Classmates tab.

   - You can invite multiple users at the same time (you can always invite additional participants later).

   - To select multiple users, Ctrl-click (Windows) or Command-click (Macintosh) their names.

   - You can invite an entire course or Contacts group by right-clicking on the course or group title, or by clicking the gear icon ✳

2. Do one of the following:

   - Right-click (Ctrl-click on Macintosh) the name of one of the selected users and select **Invite to Group Chat > New Group Chat**.

   - Press **Ctrl+G** (Windows) or **Command+G** (Macintosh) on your keyboard.

   - Click **Tools** menu **> Group Chat > New Group Chat**.

Blackboard collaborate

Tips:

a) You can invite an entire course or Contacts group by right-clicking (Ctrl-Click on a Macintosh) on the course or group title, or by clicking the gear icon ✳

b) You can create an empty Invite to Group Chat window by choosing **Tools** menu > **Group Chat > New Group Chat** with no users selected, then drag and drop Contacts or Classmates into it.

The **Invite to Group Chat** window opens.

3. Type a name for the session in the **Group Chat Name** field, or select the name of a previous Group Chat.

4. If you wish to invite additional participants, type their names in the Add Users field. The names that you type are automatically completed based on the names in your Contacts and Classmates tabs. Alternatively, you can drag and drop additional users from your Contacts or Classmates tab into the **Invite** box.

    Press **Enter** on your keyboard to add the user to the Invited list.

5. If you wish to remove a user from the Invite list, click the ⊗ icon next to the user's name.

6. Click **Invite**. The new session is created, a Group Chat window opens, and invitations are sent to all of the users in the Invite list.
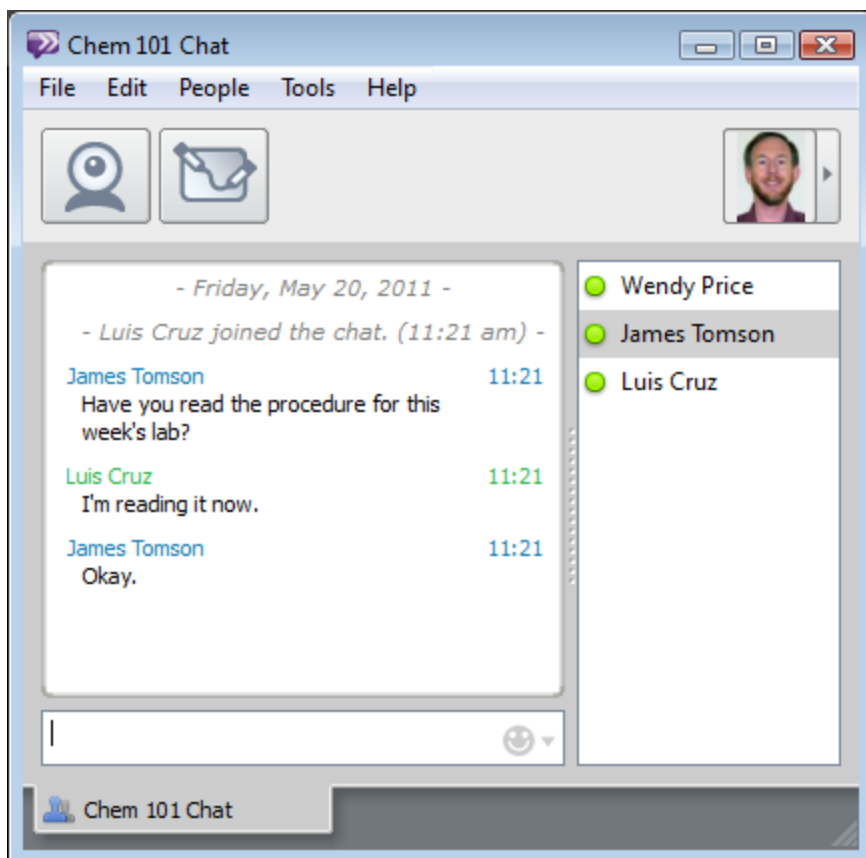
The Group Chat window provides the same functions as the regular Chat window. See The Chat Window.

Tips:

a) You can return to a Group Chat by selecting **Recent Group Chats** from the Blackboard IM menu. This can be especially useful if you leave a Group Chat unintentionally.

b) You can start a new Group Chat based on a previously created session by selecting the name of the session (instead of **New Group Chat**) from the **Invite to Group Chat** menu, or from the drop-down menu in the **Invite to Group Chat** window. This preserves only the name of the session and does not allow you to see previously sent messages. It also does not automatically invite the users from prior sessions.

See Also:
Inviting New Users to a Current Group Chat

Inviting New Users to a Current Group Chat

At any time during a Group Chat, you can invite new users to join the session. You can invite a single user at a time or multiple users. Any current participant can invite new users, not just the creator of the session.

To invite a new user, drag and drop the name of the user anywhere in the Group Chat window. The user's name appears with the pending icon ⟳ in the Participant List. This indicates that the user has received an invitation to join the session, but has not yet accepted it.

> **Tip:**
> An invitation can be canceled at any time before a user accepts it by hovering your cursor over the pending icon and clicking the **x** icon ⊗ that appears. Only the person that invited a user can cancel his or her invitation.

See Also:
Starting a New Group Chat

Ending a Chat

To End a Chat

To end a chat, close the Chat window by doing either of the following:

- Press **Ctrl+F4** (Windows) or **Command-W** (Macintosh).
- Click the close button in the upper right-hand corner of the window.

If it was a group chat, other participants can still continue the chat after you leave.

Calling

About Calling

> **Note**:
> Your institution may have disabled Audio and/or Video calling.

Calling can be used to make online communication more fluid and natural.

Calling differs from Chat in that you must call a user and wait for him or her to accept your invitation before your call can begin. You can also use Calling in combination with other Blackboard IM features such as Chat, Collaboration, and Office Hours.

A Call always uses audio. Optionally, it may also use video.

Audio

Also known as Voice over IP (VoIP), audio allows you to have a real-time audio conversation with any user currently logged in to Blackboard IM.

Requirements

To send your audio, you can use your computer's built-in microphone and standard headphones; but, for best call quality, it is recommended that you have a USB headset with an integrated microphone.

Starting a New Call

Before you can start a new Call with someone, the user must first be in either your Contacts tab or your Classmates tab.

If the user is currently in another call, you will not be able to call them until they finish their current call.

To Start a New Call

To start a new call, do one of the following:

- On the Contacts or Classmates tab

    - Select the name of the user you wish to call and click .
    - Select the name of the user you wish to call and press **Ctrl+K** (Windows) or **Command+K** (Macintosh).
    - Select the name of the user you wish to call and choose **Tools** menu > **Call > Invite to Call**.

- On the window for a Chat with the user you wish to call

    - Click .

The **Audio & Video** window opens. (And, if it is not already open, a Chat window for the user also opens.) Initially, the call only uses audio. To use video as well, click the **Video** button.

To Start a Group Call

To start a a call with more than one other participant do the following:

1. Invite the other participants to a Group Chat.
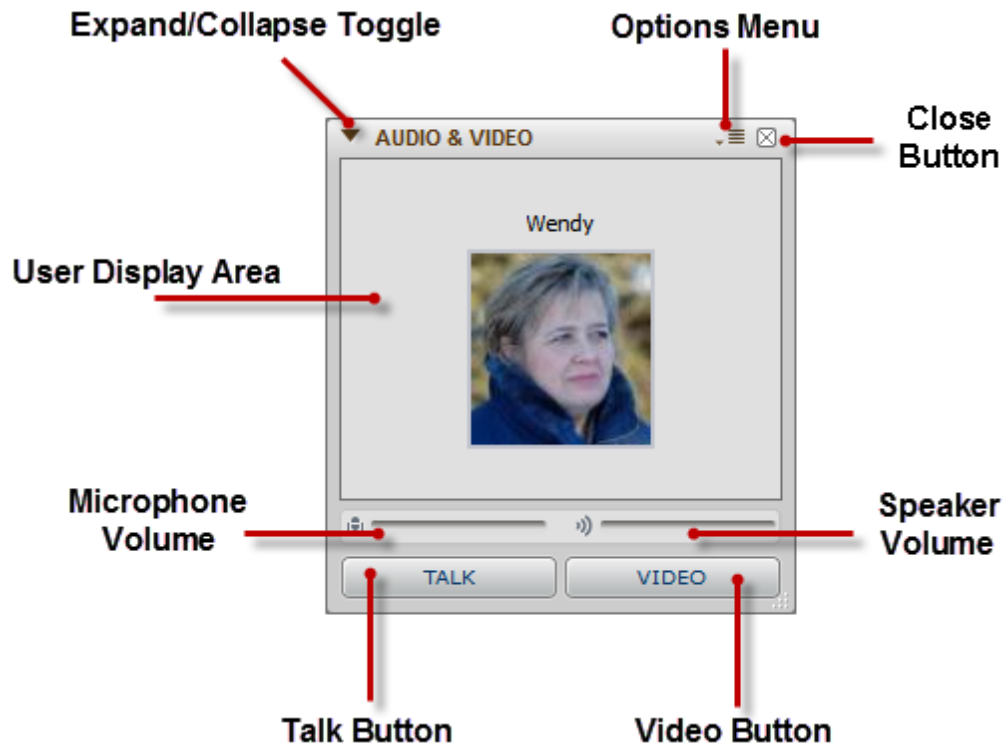
2. On the Group Chat window, click .

> **See Also**:
> The Audio & Video Window
> Ending a Call

The Audio & Video Window

The **Audio & Video** window opens when you accept a new incoming call, or when a call you start is accepted by another user.

The User Display Area

During an audio call, the User Display Area shows the first name and profile picture of the user with whom you are speaking. During a video call, it shows the video.

Microphone and Speaker Volume Bars

The Microphone and Speaker volume bars show the volume level of the incoming audio signal and the volume level of your outgoing audio signal.

The Talk Button

The **Talk** button allows you to control your outgoing audio. To talk, either click and hold the **Talk** button, or press and hold down the **Ctrl** key on your keyboard.

To lock the **Talk** button down, press **Ctrl+T** (Windows) or **Command+T** (Macintosh) on your keyboard. To unlock it, press **Ctrl+T** or **Command+T** again.

Note:

Unlike talking on a telephone, on a Call the other user cannot automatically hear you speak. You must use the **Talk** button or keyboard shortcuts to enable your outgoing audio.

Message Logs

Saving a Single Chat

While it is possible to enable Blackboard IM to automatically save message logs of all of your Chats, you can also save a single Chat as an .html file. This feature can be useful if there is information in a Chat session that you want to be able to refer to later, but you don't want to have to search through all of your message logs to find it. You can save a single chat from any form of text-based chat, including Chat, Office Hours, and Help Desks.

To Save a Single Chat

1. Click the **File** menu in the window of the chat that you wish to save.
2. Select **Save As...** The Save Chat Log window opens.
3. Choose the location where you wish to save the log.
4. Type a name for the log in the File name box.
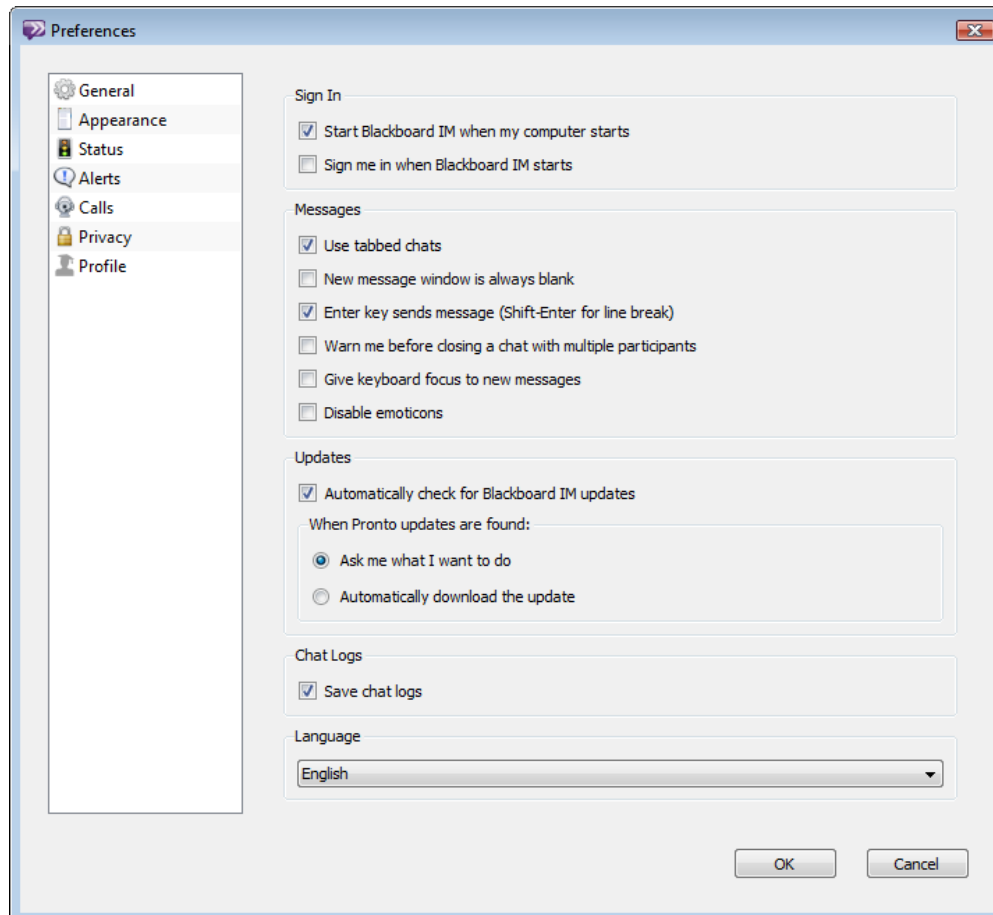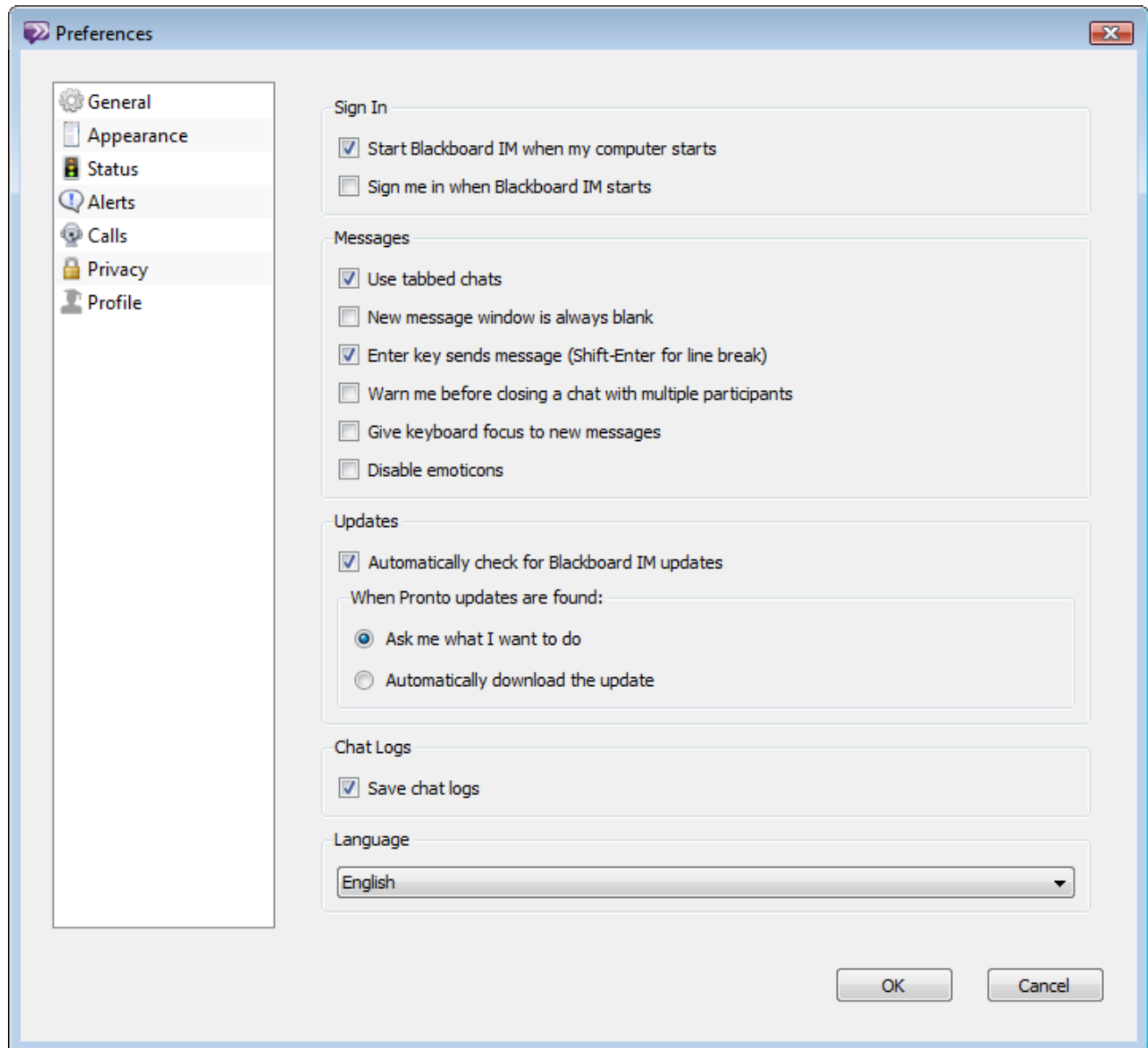5. Click **Save**.

Preferences

Accessing the Preferences Window

The Preferences window gives you access to wide range of options and settings for using Blackboard IM.

To Access the Preferences Window

1. Click the **Blackboard IM** menu.
2. Select **Preferences**. The Preferences window opens.

General Preferences

Sign In

- **Start Blackboard IM when my computer starts** automatically launches Blackboard IM every time you turn on your computer.
- **Sign me in when Blackboard IM starts** automatically signs you on to Blackboard IM using the current Blackboard IM account every time you launch the program.

Messages

- **Use tabbed chats** opens new Chats as tabs within one window, rather than separate windows.

- **New message window is always blank** opens new Chat windows without showing previous messages sent between you and the other user.

- **Enter key sends messages (Shift-Enter for line break)** allows you to use the Enter key on your keyboard to send messages in Chat.

- **Warn me before closing a chat with multiple participants** displays a warning dialog when you try to close a chat window with more than one participant.

- **Give keyboard focus to new messages** brings incoming messages to the front or, if tabs are enabled, automatically displays the tab of the new messages.

- **Disable emoticons** disables the display of emoticon images.

Updates

- **Automatically check for Blackboard IM updates** allows you to set whether Blackboard IM automatically checks for new software updates. If selected, the **When Blackboard IM updates are found:** options can be modified.

- **Ask me what I want to do** prompts you before downloading an update.

- **Automatically download the update** downloads updates without notifying you.

Language

The Language drop-down menu allows you to set the language for the Blackboard IM interface. By default this is set to match the language setting for your computer's operating system (if possible).

Appearance Preferences
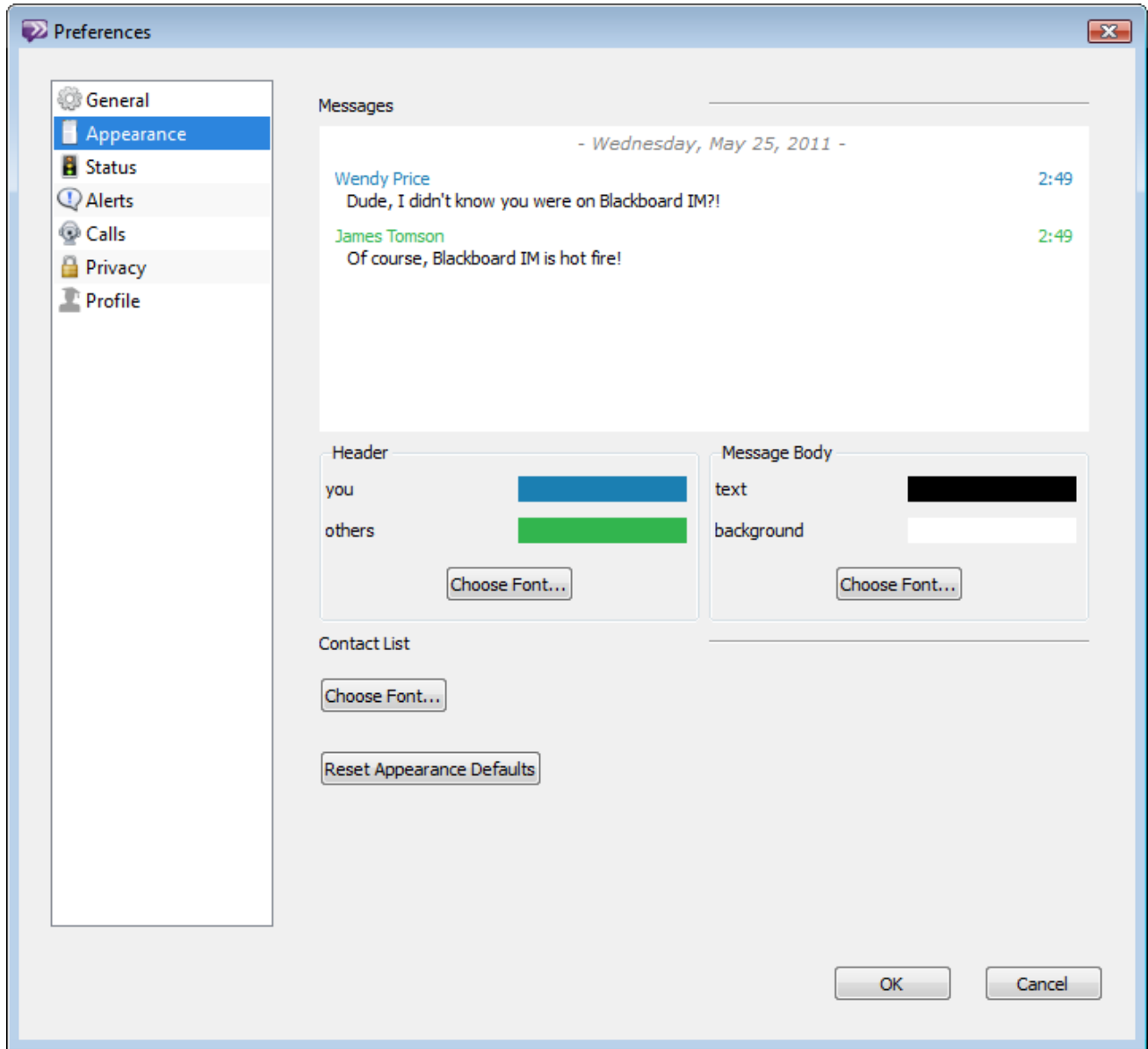
Messages

The Messages area displays of preview of the current appearance settings for the Chat window; any changes you make in the sections below are reflected in this preview.

Header

You can change the text color for your name and the names of other users in the Chat window by clicking the respective color boxes. You can change the font for the names by clicking the **Choose Font...** button.

Message Body

You can change the color of the message text in the Chat window by clicking the color box labeled **text**. You can change the background color of the Chat window by clicking the color box labeled **background**. You can change the font for the message text by clicking the **Choose Font...** button.

Contact List

You can change the font that is used to display the names of users, groups, courses, and Help Desks by clicking the **Choose Font...** button in the Contact List area.

Reset Appearance Defaults

If you want to undo all changes you have made and return to the original appearance defaults, click the **Reset Appearance Defaults** button.

Status Preferences

The Status section allows you to add, delete, and modify your custom status messages. Statuses that you have already created are shown in the list.
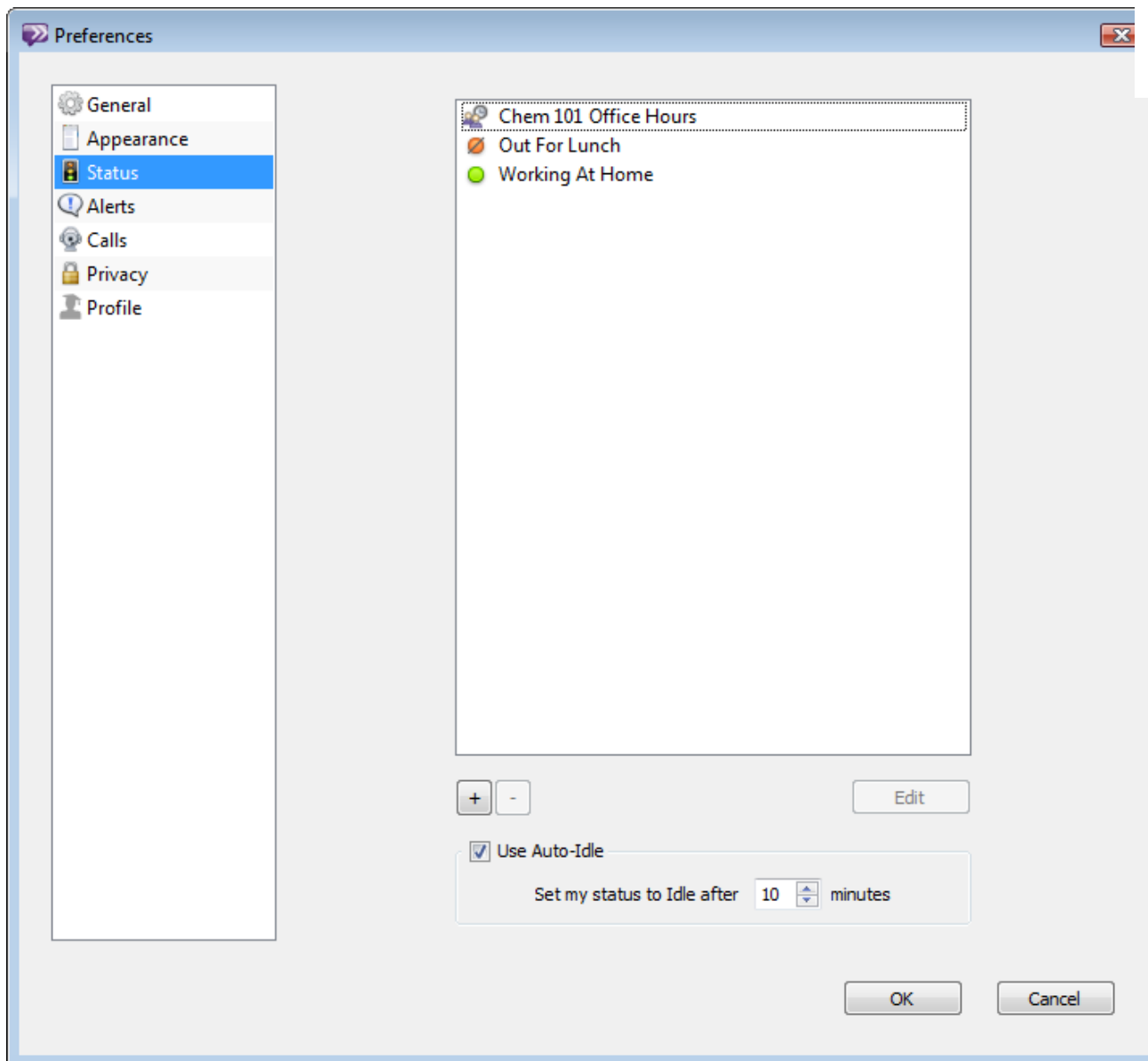
You can add a new status by clicking the plus button or remove a selected status by clicking the minus button . Select a status and click **Edit** to modify it. The **Auto-Idle** check box allows you to set a time after which your status is automatically set to idle.

Alerts Preferences

The Alerts section allows you to set a custom alert profile for a number of different actions in Blackboard IM.
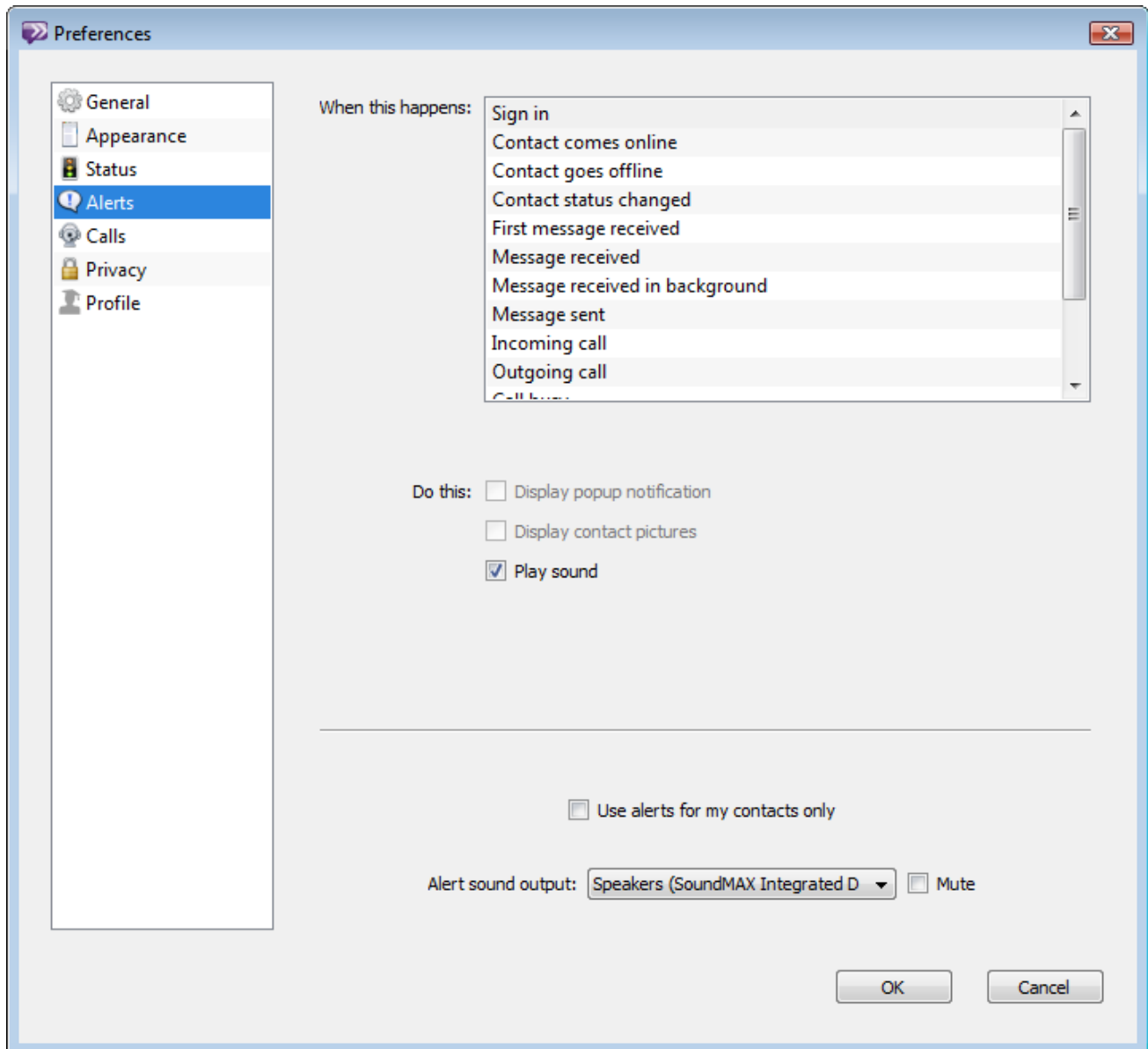
- **When this happens:** lists all of the actions for which you can set alerts.

- Once you select an action from the list, you can set which type of alert you want to associate with it in the **Do this:** area.

- The **Use alerts for my contacts only** checkbox is a global setting that allows you to apply the alerts that you have defined only to people in your Contacts tab.

- **Alert sound output:** allows you to choose the sound device used for playing alert sounds.

Calls Preferences
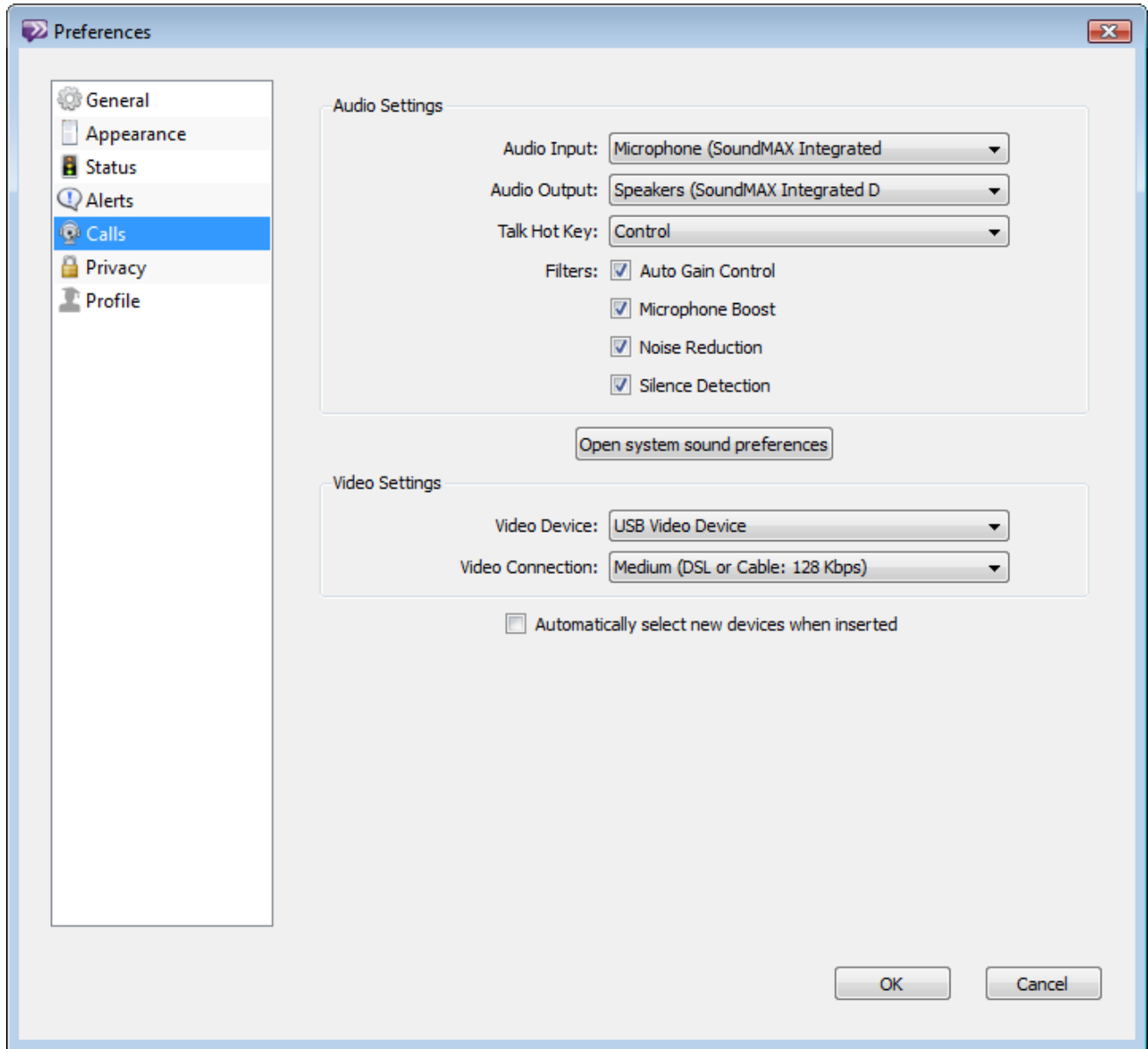
- **Audio Input** allows you to select the device that Blackboard IM uses for incoming audio.
- **Audio Output** allows you to select the device that Blackboard IM uses for outgoing audio.

- **Talk Hot Key** allows you to select the hot key that toggles the **Talk** button in Chat.

> **Note for Macintosh**:
> By default, if Spaces is enabled then F8 opens Spaces. To use it to toggle the talk button, open the System Preferences, select Keyboard shortcuts and then Expose & Spaces, and turn off the default F8 shortcut for "Activate Spaces".

- **Auto Gain Control** can help normalize the volume of incoming and outgoing audio by automatically boosting low-level audio and lowering high-level audio.

- **Microphone Boost** raises the level of your audio input if your microphone level is too weak.

- **Noise Reduction** can help reduce the level of background noise picked up by your microphone.

- **Silence Detection** allows you to transmit audio only when you are speaking, preventing static or background noise.

- **Video Device** allows you to select the device that Blackboard IM uses for video input.

- **Video Connection** allows you to adjust the video quality in Blackboard IM to match your connection speed.

- **Automatically select new devices when inserted** allows you to set whether or not Blackboard IM automatically uses audio and video devices that are connected while the program is running.
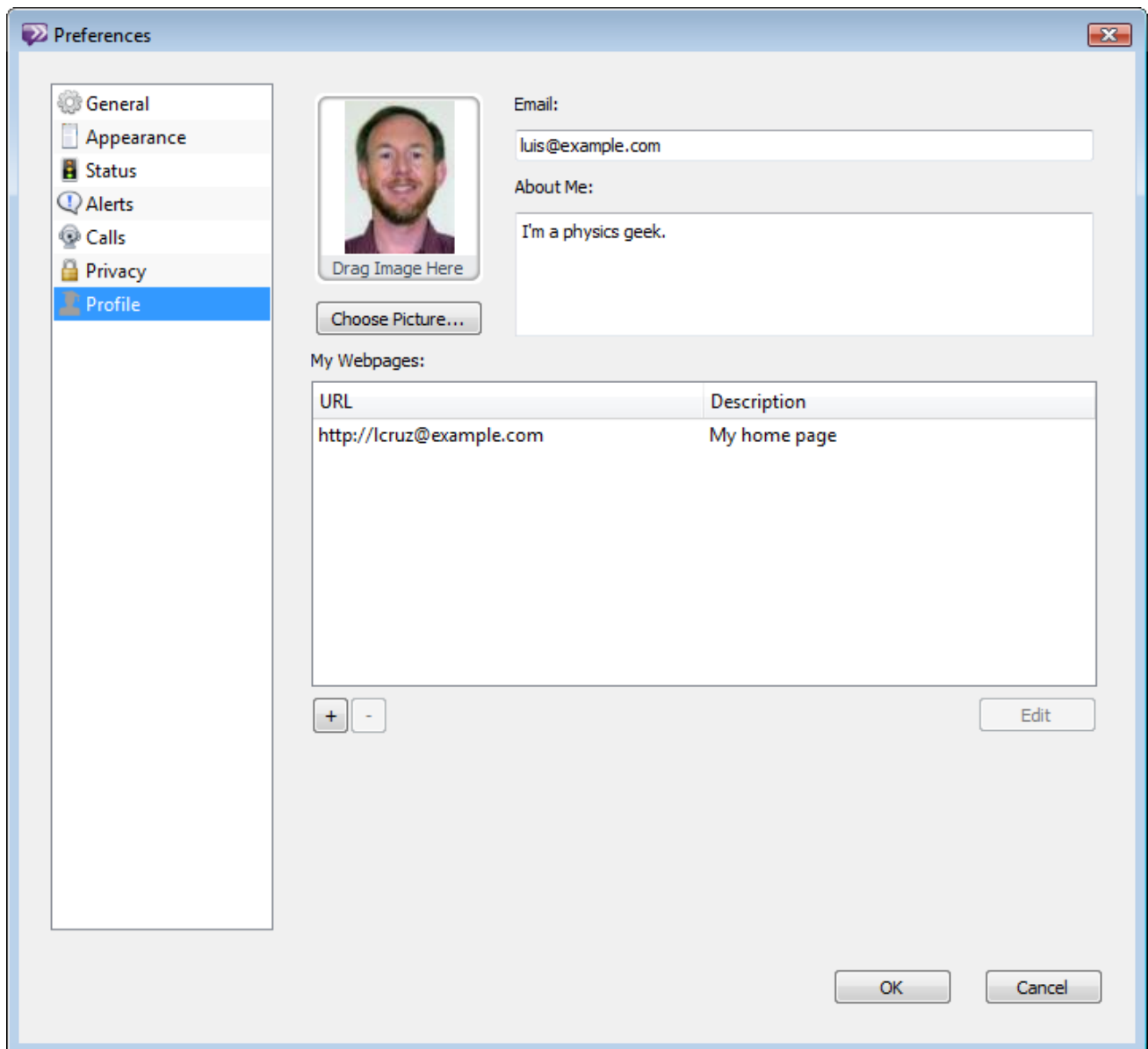
Privacy Preferences
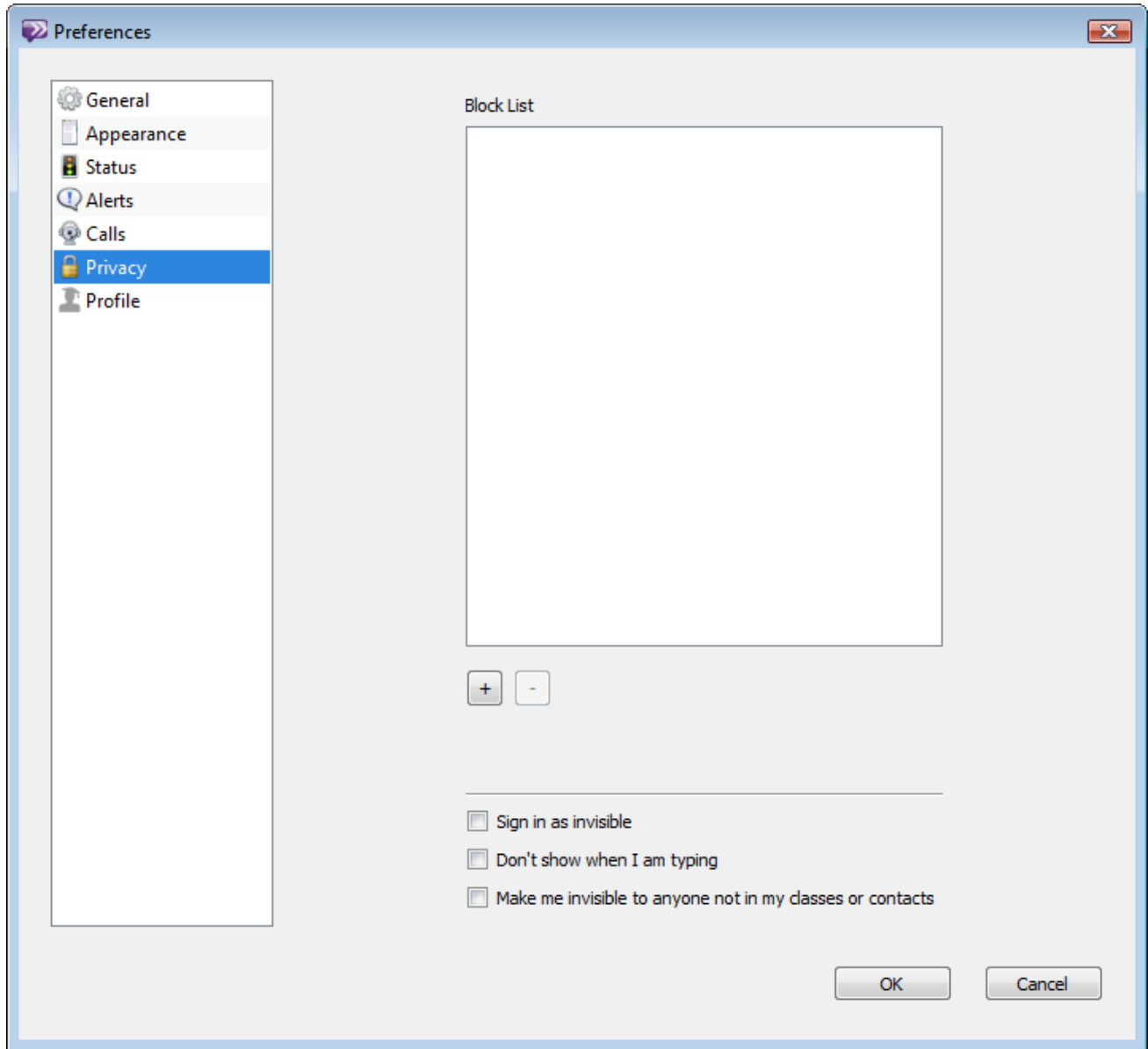
- **Block List** displays users that you have blocked from contacting you.

- The **plus** button allows you to add new users to your Block List.

- The **minus** button allows you to remove selected users from your Block List.

- **Sign in as invisible** automatically sets your status to invisible when you log in to your Blackboard IM account.

- **Don't show when I am typing** disables the pencil icon that informs other users that you are typing.

- **Make me invisible to anyone not in my classes or contacts** always displays your status as invisible to any user not in your Contacts or Classmates tab.

Profile Preferences

Profile Picture

You can add a picture that is visible to other Blackboard IM users to add a personal touch to your profile. Your picture is visible any time you contact another Blackboard IM user, anytime another user contacts you, when a user views your profile, or when a user hovers his or her cursor over your name in the Contacts or Classmates tab. To add a profile picture, either drag and drop an image file from your hard drive to the **Drag Image Here** box, or click the **Choose Picture...** button and browse your hard drive for the desired picture. The profile picture box is optimized for square images, but accepts images of any proportions.

Email

You can add an email address to make it easier for other users to contact you even if you are not online. This address does not need to be your school email address, or the address associated with your Blackboard IM account.

About Me

The About Me box allows you to enter a brief description to introduce yourself to other users. This could include your interests, your major, where you're from, or the type of people with whom you would like to communicate using Blackboard IM.

My Webpages

The My Webpages box allows you to include links in your profile to the webpages of your choice.

Other Features

Keyboard Shortcuts

The following keyboard shortcuts can make it easier to access certain features in Blackboard IM:

Main Window

Action	Shortcut (Windows)	Shortcut (Macintosh)
Add contact	Ctrl + Shift + A	Command + Shift + A
Add group	Ctrl + Shift + G	Command + Shift + G
Block user	Ctrl + Shift + B	Command + Shift + B
Call	Ctrl + K	Command + K
Chat	Enter	Enter
Close window	Alt-F4	Command + W
New group chat	Ctrl + Alt + G	Command + Option + G
Open help	F1	
Open preferences	Ctrl-,	Command + ,
Remove user or group	Shift + Del	Command + Del
Show message log	Ctrl + L	Command + L
Show profile info	Ctrl + I	Command + I
Web conference	CTRL + U	Command + U

Chat Window

Action	Shortcut (Windows)	Shortcut (Macintosh)
Block contact	Ctrl + Shift + B	Command + Shift + B
Call	Ctrl + K	Command + K
Close	Esc	Command + W
Cycle through chat tabs	Ctrl + Tab	Command + left arrow, Command + right arrow
Change chat tabs	Ctrl + 1, Ctrl + 2, Ctrl + 3, etc.	Command + 1, Command + 2, Command + 3, etc.
Edit > Copy	Ctrl + C	Command + C
Edit > Cut	Ctrl + X	Command + X
Edit > Paste	Ctrl + V	Command + V
Edit > Redo	Ctrl + Y	Command + Y
Edit > Select All	Ctrl + A	Command + A
Edit > Undo	Ctrl + Z	Command + Z
Insert tab into message	Ctrl + Shift + Tab	Option + Tab
Invite to collaborate	Ctrl + Alt + C	Command + Option + C
New group chat	Ctrl + Alt + G	Command + Option + G
Open emoticon picker	Ctrl + E	Command + E
Open help	F1	
Open preferences	Ctrl + ,	Command + ,
Save as	Ctrl + S	Command + S
Show chat log	Ctrl + L	Command + L
Show profile info	Ctrl + I	Command + I
Start Screen Sharing	Ctrl + Alt + S	Command + Option + S
Start Web Tour	Ctrl + Alt + U	Command + Option + U
Start Whiteboard	Ctrl + Alt + W	Command + Option + W

Audio & Video Window

Action	Shortcut (Windows)	Shortcut (Macintosh)
Close	Ctrl + F4	Command + W
Show video preview	Ctrl + Shift + D	Command + Shift + D
Temporarily hold Talk button down **Note**: This is configurable via the Calls Preferences.	Ctrl, F8, or none	Control, F8, or none
Toggle full-screen mode	Ctrl + F	Command + F
Toggle Talk button	Ctrl + T	Command + T
Toggle Video button	Ctrl + D	Command + D
Video Capture	Ctrl + E	Command + E

General

| Action	Shortcut (Windows)	Shortcut (Macintosh)
Hide application		Command + H
Hide others		Command + Option + H
Minimize window		Command + M
Quit		Command + Q
Show contact list		Command + Option + 1
Open contextual (right-click) menu	Shift + F10	

Notes for Macintosh:
• In order for the Command + W shortcut to work (to end a call and close the Audio Video window) , open the System Preferences, select Keyboard, and select "All Controls" under "Full Keyboard Access".
• By default, if Spaces is enabled then F8 opens Spaces. To use it to toggle the talk button, open the System Preferences, select Keyboard shortcuts and then Expose & Spaces, and turn off the default F8 shortcut for "Activate Spaces".

Software Updates

From time to time, Blackboard Collaborate releases new software updates for Blackboard IM. By default, the program automatically checks for updates periodically and, when an update is found, asks you whether or not you want to download it. You can change these settings in the Preferences window. You can also manually check for updates at any time.

To Change Your Software Update Settings

1. Click the **Blackboard IM** menu.

2. Select **Preferences.** The Preferences window opens.

3. Select **General** (if it is not already selected).
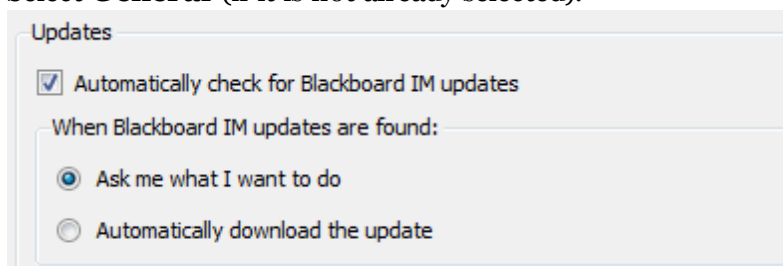
4. In the Updates area, adjust the settings as desired:

    - **Automatically check for Blackboard IM updates** allows you to enable or dis-able automatic update detection. If selected, the **When Blackboard IM updates are found:** options can be modified:

        - **Ask me what I want to do** asks you whether or not you want to down-load updates when they are detected.

        - **Automatically download the update** downloads updates when they are detected without asking you first.

5. Click **OK**.

To Manually Check for Software Updates

1. Click the **Help** menu in the Blackboard IM window.

2. Select **Check For Updates.** A dialog box appears, telling you whether or not new updates are available.

Additional Resources

Technical Support

For technical support issue please visit our Support Portal at http://-support.blackboardcollaborate.com where you can search our knowledge base, submit a ticket, chat with a support representative or call our help desk."

Additional Documentation

For more information on Blackboard IM's more advanced features see the following guides:

- Administrator's Guide - tells administrators how to configure Blackboard IM.

- *Blackboard IM Accessibility Guide* - provides details of *Blackboard IM* accessibility fea-tures such as support for screen readers.

- *Blackboard IM Computer Lab Installation Guide* - tells lab administrators how to set up Blackboard IM in computer labs.
  >

- *Blackboard IM Silent Installation Guide* - describes how to install Blackboard IM through the command line.

- *Blackboard IM Universal Integration Guide* - tells administrators how to synchronize data with the Blackboard IM server.

You can find all these guides, plus more resources, on the [Blackboard Collaborate On-Demand Learning Center](#).

Community

We encourage Blackboard Collaborate users of all levels to join our [Collaborati User's Group](#), a new community in which users can share their experiences, ideas, research, and best practices with their peers via forums and user-generated blogs.

Product Feedback

Blackboard Collaborate welcomes your comments and suggestions. If you have an idea for a new feature or enhancement, or would like to send other feedback, please email [BBCollaborateFeedback@blackboard.com](#).

Your suggestion will be sent directly to out Product Management Team.